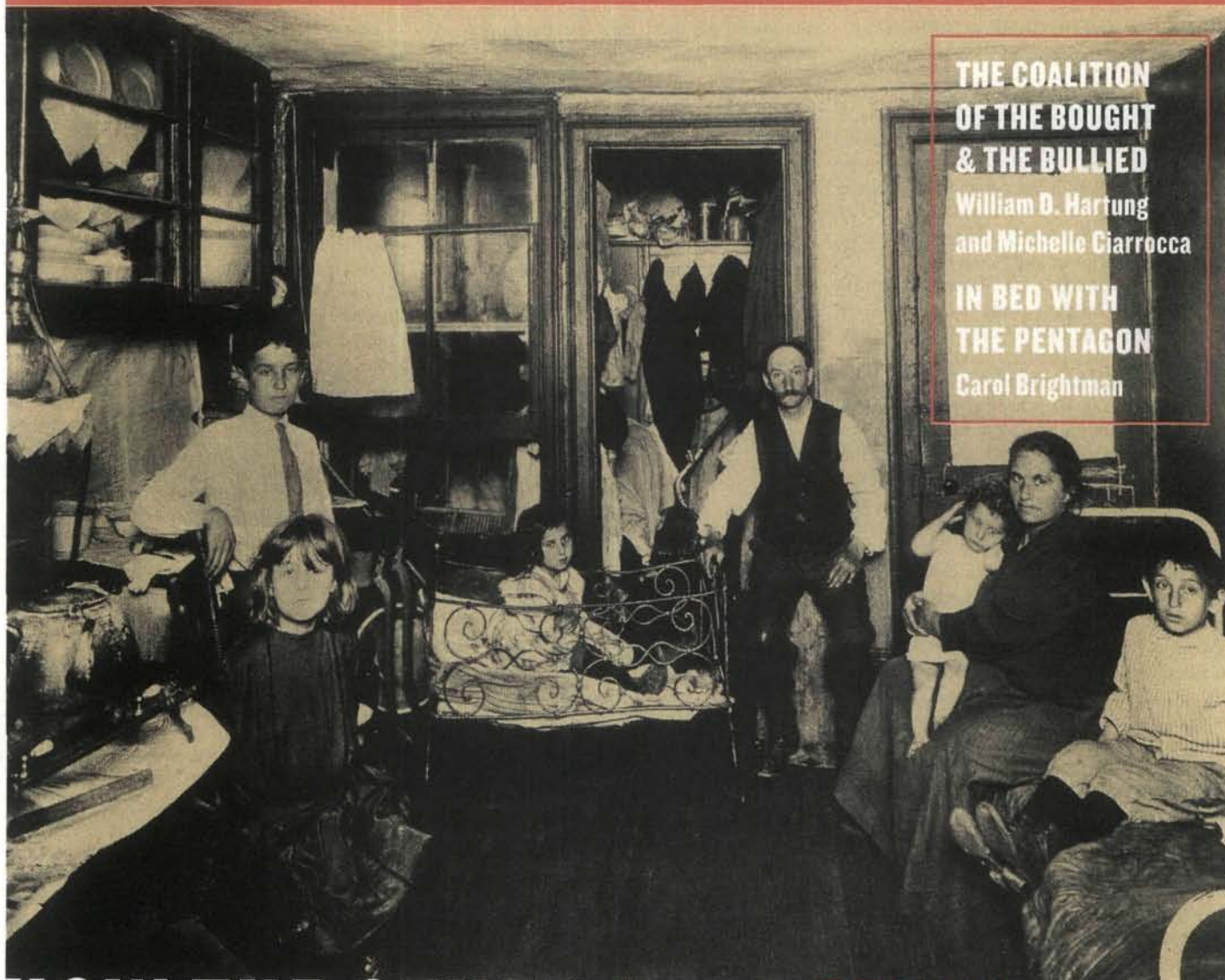


The Nation.



**THE COALITION
OF THE BOUGHT
& THE BULLIED**

William D. Hartung
and Michelle Ciarrocca

**IN BED WITH
THE PENTAGON**

Carol Brightman

HOW THE OTHER HALF **STILL** LIVES

IN THE SHADOW OF WEALTH, NEW YORK'S POOR INCREASE

by JACK NEWFIELD

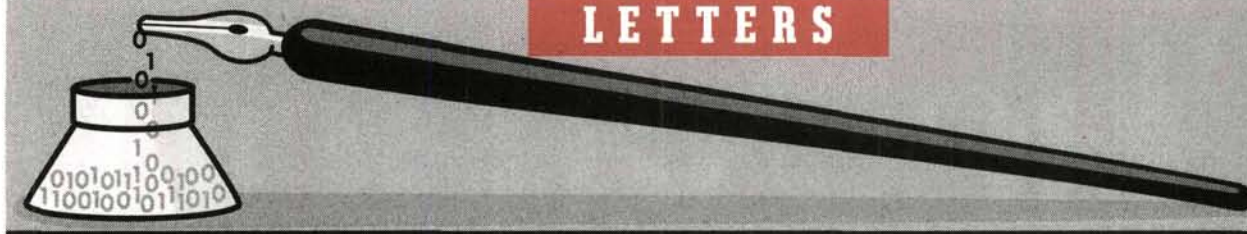


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CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

SUDDENLY THERE CAME A TAPPING...

New York City

■ As the executive producer of the current tour of *Bring In 'Da Noise, Bring In 'Da Funk*, I found Diane Rafferty's article on Savion Glover, "Tap Roots" [Jan. 13/20] offensive, inappropriate and filled with inaccuracies. The article displayed a significant lack of knowledge of the theater, the marketing and press process, and of Savion Glover and *Noise/Funk*.

Rafferty's comment that Glover has "significantly reduced his dance time" by "giving over the important role of 'Da Kid' is completely inaccurate. In this production of *Noise/Funk*, Glover recreates the role of 'da Beat, which he originated in the Broadway production. 'Da Beat is the lead role, the most extensive dance role, and is pivotal to the creation of the evening. Glover has never appeared in the role of 'da Kid. That role was originated on Broadway by Dule Hill and is now expertly performed by Cartier Williams.

I am puzzled by Rafferty's statement that Savion Glover "loathes performing." Not only does Glover perform a strenuous role eight times a week in *Noise/Funk*, but in addition his time is filled with rehearsals, sound checks, master classes, lecture demonstrations and other publicity events—all of which he truly enjoys. In my sixteen years of working with Savion, I have witnessed pure joy when he is performing.

The lecture demonstration at which Rafferty interviewed Glover began on time at 4 PM and lasted for the allotted thirty minutes. It was given at the request of Providence's Black Repertory Theatre in conjunction with the Providence Performing Arts Center, where *Noise/Funk* was appearing. It was specifically targeted to reach out to the community's African-American audience, which would explain why Rafferty saw mostly African-Americans that day.

A lecture demonstration is not a capsule performance of the show. As with all events of this nature, we limit the time Glover spends with each press representative to facilitate everyone's needs. If Rafferty was angry that she did not have adequate time with Glover, she should have taken issue with my office or the press department.

ALDO SCROFANI

New York City

■ As a tap artist who has shared the stage with Savion Glover, I thank Diane Rafferty for doing justice to Savion's unbeatable genius, despite his many ambiguities. Rafferty wonders why Savion hides from the world. Tap dancers in this country are fed up with not being acknowledged for their contribution to jazz music and jazz dance, and with being forced into dance families

they were not born into. (Savion might have been sincere in saying he knows nothing about Celtic music.) All his life, Savion seems to have been asked only one thing: to dance. Not talk. Not think (even though he does). Despite my love for Savion's work, I too am upset that he does not show a greater effort to educate the media when he is the one benefiting from their attention. Retreating behind the dance and avoiding speaking is his choice. But one also has to remember that the issues to be spoken about are painful. We tap dancers are tired of being told tap is not legitimate, when those who came before us have shown us the greatest examples of authenticity, courage, invention and integrity.

People the world over relate deeply to tap. Any Thursday night in Harlem, you'll bump into tappers from Japan, Israel, Russia, Argentina, Finland, Madagascar, France, etc. Maybe Savion has not fully understood yet the worldwide impact of tap as a language of freedom (misery exists beyond black America in many countries). But Savion is not the one to blame. Rather it's the system that is trying to turn him (and others) into a product that only dances and should not see beyond his own world. In that regard, little has changed since Bill Bojangles's time.

In the past ten years, the tap world has expanded and includes "talkative" artists from abroad with a different perspective—Guyanese tap dancer Tamango (creator of Urban Tap), Max Pollak from Austria (creator of Rumba Tap), myself from France (creator of BeateeZ'n the Beat). We are often shocked to realize the lack of historical knowledge of tap in the United States, and by writing that Savion is "the greatest tap dancer that ever breathed," Rafferty is forgetting the Nicholas Brothers, Jimmy Slyde, Peg Leg Bates and Baby Laurence.

ROXANE BUTTERFLY

RAFFERTY REPLIES

New York City

■ In the Broadway production my husband, my mother and I saw in 1996, Savion Glover danced the role of 'Da Kid: Perhaps he was filling in for Dule Hill that day, and if so, I apologize for saying that Glover reduced his dance time in *Noise/Funk*. The lecture demonstration was scheduled for 3 PM. I learned via e-mail from my press contact on the day of the event that it would be delayed an hour. I reported what I saw and heard. Obviously, Aldo Scrofani did not read my piece, since I made it perfectly clear that, far from wanting more time to interview Glover, I cut the interview short myself for the reasons stated in my article.

Roxane Butterfly raises many fascinating issues. Some clarifications: What I addressed was

Celtic dance influences on tap, not Celtic music. As I explained, Glover told me he doesn't believe any such influences exist, despite his own book acknowledging them. (I hope he sees *Gangs of New York*, which features an African-American man, circa 1861, stomping out a jig to Irish fiddling. Director Martin Scorsese emphasizes several times the origins of tap.)

And I give more credit to the Nicholas Brothers than does Glover, who mocks these wonderful artists in his choreography for *Noise/Funk*. While fully recognizing the genius of the Nicholas Brothers and others, I stick to my opinion that Glover is the greatest tap dancer who ever breathed.

DIANE RAFFERTY

THE QUESTION OF ANSWER

Topeka, Kan.

■ In response to Katha Pollitt's article concerning the January march on Washington ["Subject to Debate," Feb. 10]: Pollitt is absolutely right. I was one of the organizers of three busloads of people from Kansas. We all have serious misgivings about ANSWER. But we chose to attend the rally not in support of ANSWER but to lend our support to an antiwar movement. On returning to Kansas some of us, myself included, have gone on radio talk shows to continue to get the message out. On the shows we've encountered the same opinions of ANSWER Pollitt mentions. Our response has been: "We didn't go to Washington to listen to speeches. We went to demonstrate against the war on Iraq."

I would like to add that at the January march the level of anger or frustration with the Administration was certainly greater than at the October march, which some of us had also attended. Also, the January march came as close to being an anti-Bush rally as it was an antiwar rally. There were many, many signs and protesters speaking on issues of jobs, healthcare, oil, the economy, etc. This has not been reported in the mainstream press.

JANET BRUNTON

New York City

■ Thanks to Katha Pollitt for mentioning the CPD's statement, "We Oppose Both Saddam Hussein and the US War on Iraq." There are now more than 4,000 signers (to read or sign, go to www.cpdweb.org).

JOANNE LANDY,

THOMAS HARRISON, JENNIFER SCARLOTT
Campaign for Peace and Democracy

YOU CAN HELP REFORM THE MEDIA!

Mad River Valley, Vt.

■ Kudos to *The Nation* for its continued focus on the politics of media reform and to Alterman, Nichols, McChesney, Chester, Miller and others

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EDITORIALS

Iraq Endgame

Brushing aside the world's largest antiwar demonstrations ever, the United States, Britain and Spain have introduced a new United Nations Security Council resolution that would in their view authorize the use of force against Iraq. The Bush Administration has thus chosen not only to defy world public opinion but also to embark on an endgame of bullying and buying off other Security Council members to win their consent to war (see "Buying a Coalition," page 4). To those who can't be bought or bullied, the Administration brandishes the threat of blackmail: Consent to our war or we will render the UN irrelevant, it warns.

That the Administration must resort to such practices reveals just how unsuccessful it has been in convincing the world of the merits of its case. (Further evidence came on February 26, when 199 British MPs—the majority from Prime Minister Tony Blair's party—voted to reject Blair's war policy.) If the United States succeeds in "winning" a vote on its resolution through bribery and threats, it will weaken, perhaps irrevocably, UN credibility on matters of peace and security, and further undermine the role of international law. The UN's relevance rests on its adherence to the rule of law. In this case that means defying US pressure for an unjustified war. We therefore hold the view that Council members have no choice but to oppose the US-British-Spanish resolution and join the people of the world in demanding that all countries participate in a coordinated Iraq policy. France, Germany and Russia have offered an avenue more consistent with international security: a proposal that the Council adopt a "realistic and rigorous" timeline for Iraq to complete remaining disarmament tasks.

To review briefly what we have argued before: War is unnecessary because Iraq does not now pose a threat to our national security, to its neighbors or to international peace and security. Moreover, war is unwise because the human, economic, political, social and security costs far outweigh any conceivable benefits. These costs include the possibility that war would further inflame the Arab world, destabilize pro-US governments in the region, make Americans the target of Islamic extremists at home and abroad, and bring weapons of mass destruction closer to the grasp of international terrorists. Indeed, the danger that terrorists may get their hands on chemical, biological or nuclear materials comes not from Saddam's imagined collusion with Al Qaeda but from the chaos that would result from an invasion and from the possibility that Pakistan, which actually possesses nuclear weapons, might be destabilized as a result of war. The memory of September 11 is a reminder of the need to actively defend our country, but it is not a license for irrational actions that may bring about the very danger we are trying to prevent.

The Administration and its supporters argue that inspections cannot work; that it is a question of going to war now when Saddam is weak or doing it later when he is more dangerous. Yet Saddam is weaker today because inspections forced him to destroy many of his weapons and because containment denied him access to the technology and money to rebuild his military and to pursue the development of nuclear weapons. There is no reason a program of inspections and containment can't work again—especially if the international community is united in its commitment to a strategy that spares Iraqi civilians.

Contrary to the arguments of the hawks, time is not on Saddam's side, it is on the side of peace, security and the rule of law—

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if the international community uses that time wisely. More time would allow the inspectors to locate and destroy any weapons of mass destruction that may still exist and to build greater international cooperation against terrorism. More time would allow for efforts to defuse Arab anger by helping to bring into being a democratic Palestinian state, to bring real governance to Afghanistan and to initiate programs of economic development in the Arab world. It would also allow the development of a much broader and representative democratic movement in Iraq, a shutdown of financial support for Al Qaeda and a lockdown of millions of tons of chemical, biological and nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union and in places like Pakistan. And it would allow the US government to better secure America from terrorist attack.

If history is a guide, the problem is not so much that the international community would grow weary of this benign form of containment and inspections but that US hawks would not have the patience for it, preferring war to painstaking efforts aimed at building a more secure international order. After all, it was the United States and Britain that provoked the crisis in the former UN inspections in Iraq by pursuing "regime change" and using inspectors as spies. Now they are threatening similar destructive action, dividing the international community by stretching its will beyond an acceptable course of action—this time inviting far more disastrous consequences. Therefore the Security Council must demand that Washington, London and Madrid stand down with their war plans and that they rejoin the international mainstream as it presses Iraq for cooperation and the acceptance of more inspectors.

COMMENT

Buying a Coalition

Just as his father did, George W. Bush is offering generous packages of aid and arms to nations that join his drive for war against Iraq. There is so much bargaining going on that arms analyst Ira Shorr has called the Administration's ad hoc alliance for war the "coalition of the wanting." According to former Secretary of State James Baker, winning support for the first Gulf War involved "cajoling, extracting, threatening and occasionally buying votes." This time there is far more buying and threatening than cajoling going on, and recruiting allies has been far more costly.

Would-be allies are driving harder bargains because Gulf War II is a much shakier proposition. As John Chipman of the International Institute for Strategic Studies has observed, "Then it was straightforward. Eject Iraq from Kuwait. Now it's 'regime change,' and that's...hard for many to swallow." Bush officials are hoping that massive doses of US aid will make unpopular anti-Iraq positions go down more easily. The Administration is weighing proposals for nearly \$30 billion worth of grants and subsidized loans for allies concerned about the political and economic side-effects of a new Gulf conflict.

Recipients of Administration largesse fit into two categories: (1) countries in the region seeking to be reimbursed for the negative impacts of the war, and (2) countries whose support is sought

COMMENT

as a way to legitimize the war in the eyes of a skeptical world. The biggest aid deal is being offered to one of the former—Turkey. As this went to press, the Turkish Parliament was considering a US offer of \$15 billion in aid—\$5 billion in grants and \$10 billion in guaranteed loans—in exchange for Turkey's agreement to host 62,000 US ground troops for an invasion of northern Iraq.

The Administration is also finalizing separate deals for Israel, Egypt and Jordan. Israel is seeking a multiyear deal involving \$4 billion in new grants and \$8 billion to \$10 billion in US-government guaranteed loans. Jordan is slated to receive an additional \$1 billion in aid, and Egypt is seeking new aid beyond its current \$1.3 billion, plus a free-trade deal similar to the one Jordan already has with the United States. In exchange for the increased aid, Jordan is hosting US special forces and engaging in joint intelligence gathering. Israel has shared intelligence and helped train US forces for urban combat, but the biggest "contribution" sought by the Administration is for the Sharon government to refrain from retaliating in the event of an Iraqi attack, to avoid regionalizing the conflict. Sharon has so far refused to make any such pledge. From Egypt, a key Arab ally whose population is overwhelmingly against the war, Washington is seeking a statement of political support and the use of some air bases.

Outside the Middle East, the most important battleground is the fifteen-member UN Security Council, where the United States is seeking a resolution justifying the use of force to oust Saddam Hussein. So far, Washington can count on support from the United Kingdom, Bulgaria and Spain. Bulgaria's support was secured by a US pledge to see to it that Iraq pays its outstanding debts to Bulgaria in the post-Saddam period. The Administration's next objective is to win over "swing states" like Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Guinea, Mexico and Pakistan with a mix of promises and threats.

The United States is notorious for bullying nations over key Security Council votes. In 1990, when Yemen voted against authorizing war on Iraq, a US diplomat told the Yemeni ambassador, "That was the most expensive no vote you ever cast." Three days later, all US aid to Yemen was canceled. Last November, Mauritius recalled its UN ambassador and gave him a public scolding for failing to speak out forcefully enough in support of US-sponsored Security Council Resolution 1441 against Iraq. UN expert Phyllis Bennis notes that Mauritius made this move to avoid falling afoul of a provision of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which states that US aid recipients should not "engage in activities contrary to US national security or foreign policy interests." The Administration will seek to exert similar leverage over Guinea and Cameroon, both of which are recipients of US aid under AGOA.

A new report from the Institute for Policy Studies provides a detailed accounting of the military and economic levers the Administration is likely to use to round up votes at the UN. For Mexico, a vote against the United States could spark a backlash that would undermine aid and trade, a daunting prospect for a country that sends 80 percent of its exports to the US market. A no vote by Chile could kill plans for granting it the same access to the US market that Canada and Mexico now enjoy. Pakistan will have to weigh the costs of voting with the United States and antagonizing its strongly antiwar population against the costs of voting against Washington and risking cutbacks in the hundreds

of millions in US aid and loans it is receiving as a privileged ally in the "war on terrorism." For Angola, future US loans for developing its critical oil industry may hang in the balance.

Leaders in Donald Rumsfeld's so-called New Europe who have spoken out in favor of the Administration's war policies are also hoping to receive increased US assistance. As the Pentagon considers cutbacks in its presence in Germany to punish the Schröder government for its antiwar stance, prowar governments in Eastern and Central Europe may be courted to host new US bases. In the process, they are likely to receive special favors like the recent \$3.8 billion US-government-subsidized loan to Poland to finance the purchase of Lockheed Martin F-16 combat aircraft. Don't be surprised if states like Hungary, which is hosting a US training mission for Iraqi exiles, receive sweet deals for US military equipment as a "thank you" for their support of the war in Iraq. These arms deals will no doubt be helped along by influential friends of the Administration like former Lockheed Martin vice president Bruce Jackson, who serves as chairman of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, a private, pro-intervention lobbying group launched last fall with the blessing of the White House. Jackson was involved in helping draft the widely publicized letter in support of Bush's Iraq policy by leaders of Eastern and Central European states.

Given the military and economic leverage the Administration can bring to bear, it's amazing that so many key governments have held out this long. If the global peace movement keeps the pressure on, there may be time to stop this war yet, despite the machinations of the President and his hard-line advisers.

WILLIAM D. HARTUNG AND MICHELLE CIARROCCA

William D. Hartung, the author of The Hidden Costs of War (Fourth Freedom Forum), and Michelle Ciarrocca are analysts at the World Policy Institute in New York.

In Bed With the Pentagon

It's a fascinating scheme, "this very ambitious and aggressive embed plan," as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Bryan Whitman calls it. But "embedding" journalists in selected military units is only part of the Pentagon's program for handling news organizations in the event of war in Iraq. More significant is the extraordinary reach of Pentagon planning. For months officials have been scanning the media—electronic and print, domestic and international—calculating markets and circulations and blending news shows with entertainment divisions to cover all fronts in a wartime media campaign as audacious as any ever attempted.

Not just the American press but global media will be shaped by the Pentagon's deployment of reporters, photographers and TV crews in and out of the war zone. Of more than 500 journalists in the program, around 100 are from foreign news organizations, including Al Jazeera. Only Americans, 238 of them, have trained at media boot camps for slots inside military units (although such training is not a prerequisite). Other journalists will transmit their "products" from the Pentagon or foreign capitals,

COMMENT

or “in theater” via mobile press pools and CPICs (combined press information centers).

Instead of shutting the press out of the battle over public opinion, as the military did in the Gulf War and Afghanistan, the Pentagon has decided to enlist the media’s vast resources. Some of its reasons are innocent enough, like CNN military analyst Gen. Wesley Clark’s regret that censorship during the Gulf War kept the press from documenting “a First Armored Division tank battle that was just incredible, perhaps the biggest armored battle ever.” Other motives are murkier. According to potential “embed” Dave Moniz of *USA Today*, “What is driving this [plan] is the fear that Iraq will win the propaganda war if reporters are not on the ground with troops.” The Pentagon may hope to muffle the impact of substantial civilian casualties from the “shock and awe” attacks of US bombers, or from infantry assaults on Baghdad itself with the nightly adventures on ABC or CBS of your favorite platoon at war.

“On the ground with troops” would be far from the scene of carnage—on the deck of an aircraft carrier maybe, or at Camp Doha in Kuwait. Reporters won’t be free to follow the action on their own but must travel whenever and wherever the Pentagon directs them. Even Whitman admits a “cost” to embedding, which is “that you get a very narrow view of what’s going on.” The advantage, he told Washington bureau chiefs at a recent meeting, is “you get extremely deep, rich coverage of what’s going on in a particular unit.” But he reminded them that “you will not have an embed opportunity with every ground unit [or] at every airfield location [or] on every major carrier battle group.” Reporting from CPICs or the Pentagon may fill the gaps. And news groups can pool their “feeds” to make a story, but the whole is drawn from parts the military has preselected for coverage.

The Pentagon proposes, the press disposes—albeit within softer confines than prevailed in the Gulf War. Under then-Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and Army Gen. Colin Powell, media were confined to a national press pool and ordered to submit all copy, photographs and film to military censors. Most TV footage was supplied by military crews. High-level briefings

were orchestrated by Cheney and Powell themselves because, as Cheney later told an interviewer from the Freedom Forum, “The information function was extraordinarily important. I did not have a lot of confidence I could leave that to the press.”

As a result, according to Patrick Sloyan, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his war coverage for *Newsday*, pool reporters didn’t produce a single eyewitness account of the clash between allied and Iraqi troops. Nor did images of dead bodies find their way into US media. By the time the press was taken to a battle scene, the Iraqi bodies were gone; buried in one case by giant plows mounted on Abrams battle tanks, followed by armored combat earth-movers that leveled the ground. “I don’t mean to be flip-pant,” said Whitman’s Pentagon predecessor, Pete Williams, of that event, “but there’s no nice way to kill somebody in war.” (Williams is now a Washington correspondent for NBC.)

In this war, journalists will carry their own transmission devices, but their use will depend on field commanders’ approval. Pentagon rules of engagement dictate strict prohibitions on reporting live or continuing actions, as well as future or postponed operations. Dates, times and places can be described only in general terms.

Not the facts, ma’am, but the feel—which is likely to be warm, a bit fuzzy, funny too, befitting the chronicles of a unit scribe. But any story or photograph can be squashed on the same grounds used in that other war: for operational security, success of the mission and the safety of the people involved. *Plus ça change...*

CAROL BRIGHTMAN

Carol Brightman is writing a book called Total Insecurity: The Myth of American Omnipotence, due out next year from Verso.

Patriot Act’s Big Brother

In early February, the Center for Public Integrity disclosed a leaked draft of the Bush Administration’s next round in the war on terrorism—the Domestic Security Enhancement Act (DSEA). The draft legislation, stamped CONFIDENTIAL and dated January 9, 2003, appears to be in final form but has not yet been introduced in Congress. Presumably the Administration had determined that the timing would be more propitious for passage—meaning less propitious for reasoned debate—after we go to war with Iraq. But it is one thing to play politics with the timing of a farm bill; it is another matter to do so with a bill that would radically alter our rights and freedoms.

If the Patriot Act was so named to imply that those who question its sweeping new powers of surveillance, detention and prosecution are traitors, the DSEA takes that theme one giant step further. It provides that any citizen, even native-born, who supports even the lawful activities of an organization the executive branch deems “terrorist” is presumptively stripped of his or her citizenship. To date, the “war on terrorism” has largely been directed at noncitizens, especially Arabs and Muslims. But the DSEA would actually turn citizens associated with “terrorist” groups into aliens.

They would then be subject to the deportation power, which

CALVIN TRILLIN

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TURKISH-AMERICAN ALLIANCE, ITS DIPLOMATIC SIGNIFICANCE AND ITS ROLE IN ESTABLISHING DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Get allies? That’s not hard to do.
We’ll simply go and buy a few.

COMMENT

the DSEA would expand to give the Attorney General the authority to deport any noncitizen whose presence he deems a threat to our "national defense, foreign policy or economic interests." One federal court of appeals has already ruled that this standard is not susceptible to judicial review. So this provision would give the Attorney General unreviewable authority to deport any noncitizen he chooses, with no need to prove that the person has engaged in any criminal or harmful conduct.

A US citizen stripped of his citizenship and ordered deported would presumably have nowhere to go. But another provision authorizes the Attorney General to deport persons "to any country or region regardless of whether the country or region has a government." And failing deportation to Somalia (or a similar place), the Justice Department has issued a regulation empowering it to detain indefinitely suspected terrorists who are ordered deported but cannot be removed because they are stateless or their country of origin refuses to take them back.

Other provisions are designed to further insulate the war on terrorism from public and judicial scrutiny. The bill would authorize secret arrests, a practice common in totalitarian regimes but never before authorized in the United States. It would terminate court orders barring illegal police spying entered before September 11, 2001, without regard to the need for judicial supervision. It would allow secret government wiretaps and searches without even a warrant from the supersecret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court when Congress has authorized the use of force. And it would give the government the same access to credit reports as private companies, without judicial supervision. Historically, we have imposed a higher threshold, and judicial oversight, on government access to such private information, because government has the motive and the wherewithal to abuse the information in ways private companies generally do not.

But the trajectory of the war on terrorism is probably best illustrated by an obscure provision that would eliminate the distinction between domestic terrorism and international terrorism for a host of investigatory purposes. The Administration's argument sounds reasonable enough—terrorism is terrorism, whether it's within the United States or has an international component. But in the Patriot Act debates, the Administration argued that it should be afforded broader surveillance powers over "international terrorism" because such acts are simultaneously a matter of domestic law enforcement and foreign intelligence. Because foreign intelligence gathering has traditionally been subject to looser standards than criminal law enforcement, the government argued, the looser standards should extend to domestic investigations of "international terrorism." But now it proposes to extend the same loose standards to investigations of wholly domestic crimes.

The DSEA's treatment of expatriation and domestic terrorism are harbingers of things to come. Thus far, much of the war on terrorism has been targeted at foreign nationals and sold to the American people on that ground. Americans' rights are not at stake, the argument goes, because we're concerned with "international" crime committed mostly by "aliens." With the DSEA, however, the Administration seeks to transgress both the alien-citizen line, by turning citizens into aliens for their political ties, and the domestic-international line, extending to wholly domestic

criminal-law-enforcement tools that were previously reserved for international terrorism investigations.

How will Congress respond? Thus far, when citizens' rights have been directly threatened, Congress has taken civil liberties seriously. Most recently, it blocked the Pentagon's Total Information Awareness data-mining program. But it blocked it only as applied to US citizens. As long as the Pentagon violates only foreign nationals' privacy, Congress in effect said, Go ahead. But that tactic—protecting citizens' rights while ignoring those of foreign nationals—is untenable, not only on moral grounds but because if the Administration gets its way, we are all potentially "aliens."

DAVID COLE

David Cole (cole@law.georgetown.edu) The Nation's legal affairs correspondent, is the co-author of Terrorism and the Constitution: Sacrificing Civil Liberties in the Name of National Security (New Press).

Watching Workers' Money

Though he did not get much credit for it, one of Harvey Pitt's last acts as SEC chairman was to hand a tremendous victory over the mutual-fund industry to the AFL-CIO. The SEC commissioners decreed that mutual funds must henceforth disclose how they cast their proxy votes on such corporate-governance issues as executive pay and dodging taxes by re-incorporating in Bermuda. The end of secrecy will put managers of major mutual funds in the cross-hairs of investor controversy, because the funds have routinely voted their massive holdings with the corporate managements and against the interests of ordinary investors, including the workers whose savings and pensions are invested in the funds.

The decision was a man-bites-dog story that got scant notice, but shareholder activists celebrated because it represents another critical step toward reining in unaccountable corporations and out-of-control CEOs—the concentrated insider power that produced Enron and the many other scandals. Mutual funds collectively own around 23 percent of all publicly traded companies, so how they vote their shareholdings is often decisive. Their cozy alliances with CEOs are one reason labor, environmentalists and religious groups seldom prevail in shareholder challenges aimed at cleaning up a company's behavior.

The CEO can count on the big funds' support in these fights because the CEO gives them a ton of business managing corporate-controlled investments. You don't vote with the CEO, you lose his business. In a financial system always boasting about its transparency, this profound conflict of interest has been protected by secrecy—a contradiction that even Pitt couldn't abide in the present climate of skepticism toward Wall Street. It perhaps also helped that Pitt received some 7,000 supporting comments from investors, thanks to efforts by the AFL's unions and other shareholder activists.

"This is our money, they're managing it and they are in the pockets of industry," said Ron Blackwell, corporate affairs director at the labor federation. "And this is how we got into this

(Continued on Page 24)



RUTGERS

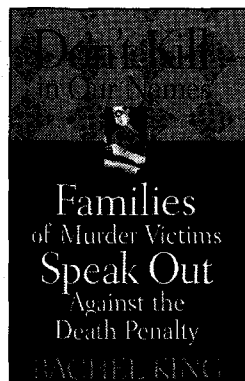
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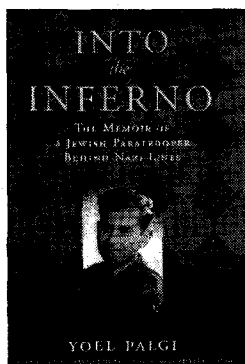
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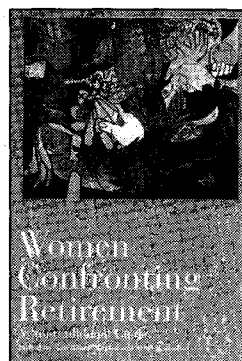
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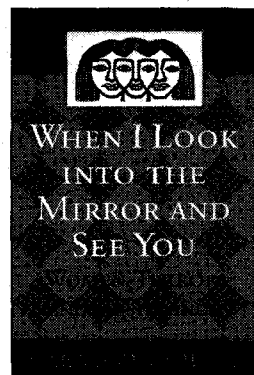
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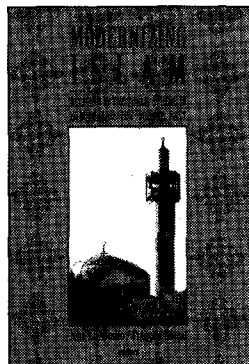
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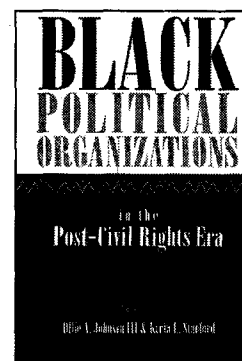
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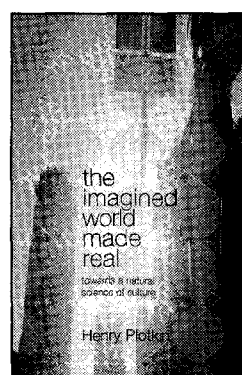
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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Hacks and Heroes

Who's the hack? I nominate *The New Yorker's* Jeffrey Goldberg. He's the new Remington, though without the artistic talent. Back in 1898, William Randolph Hearst was trying to fan war fever between the United States and Spain. He dispatched a reporter and the artist Frederic Remington to Cuba to send back blood-roiling depictions of Spanish beastliness to Cuban insurgents. Remington wired to say he could find nothing sensational to draw and could he come home. Famously, Hearst wired him, "Please remain. You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war." Remington duly did so.

I wouldn't set *The New Yorker's* editor, David Remnick, in the shoes of a Kong-sized monster like Hearst. Remnick is a third-tier talent who has always got ahead by singing the correct career-enhancing tunes, as witness his awful reporting from Russia in the 1990s. Art Spiegelman recently quit *The New Yorker*, remarking that these dangerous times require courage and the ability to be provocative, but alas, "Remnick does not feel up to the challenge."

That's putting it politely. Remnick's watch has been lackluster and cowardly. He is also the current sponsor (Marty Peretz of *The New Republic* was an earlier one) of Goldberg, whose first major chunk of agitprop for *The New Yorker* was published on March 25 of last year. Titled "The Great Terror," it was billed as containing disclosures of Saddam Hussein's "possible ties to Al Qaeda." This was at a moment when the FBI and CIA had just shot down the war party's claim of a meeting between Mohamed Atta and an Iraqi intelligence agent in Prague before the 9/11 attacks. Goldberg saved the day for the Bush crowd.

At the core of his rambling, 16,000-word piece was an interview in the Kurdish-held Iraqi town of Sulaimaniya with Mohammed Mansour Shahab, who offered the eager Goldberg a wealth of detail about his activities as a link between Osama bin Laden and the Iraqis, shuttling arms and other equipment. The piece was gratefully seized upon by the Administration as proof of The Link.

The *coup de grâce* to Goldberg's credibility fell on February 9 of this year in the London *Observer*, administered by Jason Burke, its chief reporter. Burke established beyond doubt that Goldberg's great source is a clumsy liar who did not even know the appearance of Kandahar, whither he claimed to have journeyed to deal with bin Laden, and who confected his fantasies in the hope of a shorter prison sentence.

Then, on February 10, amid widespread cynicism about the Administration's rationales for war, Remnick published another Goldberg special, "The Unknown: The C.I.A. and the Pentagon take another look at Al Qaeda and Iraq." This 6,000-word screed had no pretensions to being anything other than a servile rendition of Donald Rumsfeld's theory of intelligence: "Build a hypothesis, and then see if the data support the hypothesis, rather than the reverse." In other words, torture the data until the data confess. It's a disgraceful piece of brown-nosing (of Rumsfeld, Tenet et al.),



devoid of even the appearance of independent journalism. "Reporter at Large"? Remnick should retire the rubric, at least for Goldberg, and advertise his work as "White House Handout."

Now the heroes. Goldberg once served in Israel's armed forces, which may or may not be a guide to his political agenda. There are certainly some brave young souls in Israel these days who take their moral duty seriously. For months the Israeli military authorities and the Sharon government have been quietly worried by the specter of serious civil disobedience, most notably from conscientious objectors.

Now the Israeli government is really turning up the heat on the refuseniks. Neve Gordon, a professor at Ben-Gurion University, says the authorities worry that resistance to military service, either for reasons of pacifism or abhorrence at the prospect of committing war crimes in the occupied territories, might spread to more draft-age kids. Among those who face possible court-martial is Yoni Ben-Artzi, nephew of former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Ben-Artzi, sentenced to multiple thirty-day terms, has been in jail now for more than 200 days.

Ben-Artzi is a conscientious objector, a status that has standing in international law, signed by Israel. Nonetheless, the military prosecutor refuses to recognize his status as a CO, even though in the case of Uri Yakobi, held in jail as a CO for almost half a year, the IDF acknowledged on February 25 that he was unfit for military service and released him.

Yakobi is more fortunate than the other high school seniors who have refused to be drafted. Despite the fact that the COs have announced their willingness to serve the state through some kind of civil service, Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon and military prosecutors are punishing the young men again and again for the same "offense," as noted above in the case of Ben-Artzi.

Although political refuseniks are punished severely, thousands of yeshiva students are routinely exempted from military service, as are some women refuseniks (such as the daughter of Chief of Staff Ya'alon, a man who recently described Palestinians as a cancer needing "chemotherapy").

The authorities are being rough on some of the political resisters. Take the case of Haggai Matar, who helped initiate the high school refusenik movement in 2001 and who has been in jail for more than 130 days. Matar, now facing court-martial and a possible three years in prison, has denounced the occupation, speaking last year in a number of cities across the United States.

Instead of court-martialing kids who refuse to commit war crimes in the territories, Israel should court-martial the war criminals themselves, as Belgium recommends. Shin Bet chief Avi Dichter recently canceled a trip to Belgium, fearing the Belgians would try to arrest him because of Israel's conduct in the territories. Dichter was scheduled to deliver a lecture at a conference on international terror.

For more information on the campaign to release the conscientious objectors visit www.refusersolidarity.net. ■

PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

Loose Lips and Other Slips

It is good news that Total Information Awareness has been blocked, at least for the moment. The great computerized search engine that was to have scrutinized our every blip has been put on hold by Congress. That John Poindexter, convicted of lying to Congress, was to have headed the project seems to have scared even the most loyal of Republican party-liners. Our fear should be only partly assuaged, however, because even in the absence of one big computer roundhouse, the recent and increasing consolidation of intelligence and law enforcement agencies still makes for an interconnected database of sweeping and potentially intrusive dimension.

While agencies' sharing knowledge is important in dangerous times, the consolidation is justly controversial because of concerns about privacy and free speech. Yet when I discuss this with non-lawyer friends, many seem worried in an abstracted fashion, as though surveillance were an inconvenience on the order of a nosy and fussy old neighbor. In many people's minds free speech is a "right" to hurl epithets at politically correct wusses, and to do so with no fear of having your fraternity suspended.

But what is at stake in the First Amendment is the ability to criticize the government, not one's classmates, with no fear of prosecution. It has always been a tricky proposition for the government to distinguish words that subvert, or threaten, or terrorize, from those that are passionately, unpleasantly and publicly disagreeable. Public accountability is how we have at least theoretically monitored that tension based upon an understanding that our institutions comprise an intricate web of checks and balances: a precise law from the legislature, executive action in extreme cases, that action checked by strong and independent judicial oversight.

The new powers of Homeland Security to snoop don't refer much to that balance. The law is anything but clear. The executive has expanded its discretion to act secretly and without accountability—for what it admits will be a very long time—by claiming wartime powers. And the judiciary has ceded an alarming amount of its power of review to the executive—most egregiously in decisions, as I have discussed previously, to allow the President to designate citizens "enemy combatants" with no explanation whatsoever. In short, what we face is not just a matter of "the government" listening in on the lives of citizens but a structure in which only one branch dominates, that branch whose prime function is initiating military, police and prosecutorial actions.

And so we have the astonishing Kafkaesque situation where the military detains citizens without charges; where the police monitor campuses, places of worship, health records and political association with a finer-toothed comb than at any time in our history; and where the office of the Attorney General—the lord high prosecutor of the land—refuses to answer requests from Congress for information about how the new surveillance laws are being interpreted and administered.

If there is no official word about what is going on behind the wall of silence, there has been leaked draft legislation in which the

DIARY OF A
MAD LAW
PROFESSOR

Justice Department proposed stripping citizenship from anyone who supports terrorism (the definition of "support" remaining a troublesomely discretionary concept). The report was dismissed by John Ashcroft's spokespeople as informal office conversation, not a big deal, just tossing ideas around. Call me a cynic, but I worry that it was even a ball in the air.

In the absence of clarity at this confused moment in history, one is left to imagine a range of possibilities, from mere mistake to wild excess. So let me offer some of my tamer fears as a way of suggest-

ing discussion about what limits we the people might want to bring to bear on the process. For example, let's consider the fear that those computerized search engines are very much like spellcheckers in their search for "pattern." Recently, I happened to type the name "Amanda" in an e-mail I was sending. The spellchecker wanted to know if I didn't mean "armadillo." I worry that the military's spellchecker will want to know if I didn't really mean "armada."

I also worry that mechanical perusals of massive amounts of data might be useful for identifying certain very broad patterns; but effective interpretation requires something more, like justice or mercy or wisdom—sentient intelligence, human intelligence, intelligence grounded in a sense of substantive as well as procedural fairness. Under the best of circumstances, third parties overhearing any conversation are just not going to get a lot of what is really going on. Full comprehension is hard enough if we are speaking directly to one another in the same idiom. It's infinitely more complicated standing on the outside. Perhaps some of us have had the experience of reading a transcript of one's words—from a meeting, a deposition, or a set of minutes taken by someone who is not listening with any suspicion, someone neutral but still not exactly your mother. If so, one is likely to be startled by the flatness of the record, and by the rampant errors and mishearings of the transcriber. The transcriber is a third party, an overhearing ear, someone who listens without a sense of inclusion and therefore with no response to inflection, no sense of context or history, and certainly no sense of wordplay. Few people ever willingly permit raw transcription to become official without at least some check for accuracy.

We must begin to think about what happens to freedom of expression if we risk detention for what is recorded without such checks for accuracy; if we can be prosecuted by the government for the unguarded, thoughtless word, the gypsy word, the loosely suggestive word that hangs in the brain with the wrong crowd, that associates in the computer with those words deemed evil or likely to do evil. We must begin to wonder what happens to us when FBI agents settle for the long haul in our spiritual, academic and scientific communities. It is not God or the muse who will be listening to our collective mortal imprecations, but Big Brother, who sitteth neither on the left nor the right hand of the Father, but squarely in front, blocking the view, intercepting prayers and decoding them for hints of treachery. ■



ARTICLES

HOW THE OTHER HALF STILL LIVES

IN THE SHADOW OF WEALTH, NEW YORK'S POOR INCREASE

by JACK NEWFIELD

In 1890 the great photojournalist Jacob Riis published his now classic book about immigrant tenement poverty in lower Manhattan, called *How the Other Half Lives*. During the past few months I have tried to retrace some of Riis's steps through modern New York's pain and deprivation. As New York's (and America's) economy has turned bleaker and bleaker, I hung out in unemployment offices, food-stamp application centers and the occasional job fair, where lines of job-seekers were never short. I traveled around in a van with volunteers from the Coalition for the Homeless as they distributed free hot meals at night to the city's most defeated and destitute inhabitants.

I visited union halls, food pantries, immigrant community centers and the dreadful Emergency Assistance Unit (EAU) in the Bronx. I interviewed community organizers, economists, politicians, leaders of nonprofit advocacy groups—as well as the jobless, homeless and hopeless. I wanted to understand better how the other half lives now, and who was responsible for this misery in the midst of this new, twenty-first-century Gilded Age of excess produced by the money culture, corporate scandal and the concentration of wealth and power.

What I learned was that in some ways little has changed since Riis published his reportorial findings in 1890. The poor are still largely invisible to the complacent majority. Most Americans don't see the everydayness of poverty. It is segregated in "bad neighborhoods" and in impersonal government waiting rooms. We don't see all the people being told there are no applications for food stamps available at that location; all the people post-

poning medical treatment for their children because they don't have health insurance; all the people trying to find a job with their phone service shut off because they couldn't pay the bill; or all the deliverymen for drugstores and supermarkets paid only \$3 an hour, which is illegal.

In one way we are even worse off than we were 113 years ago: We have no Jacob Riis now humanizing poverty, making the satisfied see it and smell it. We have no American Dickens or Orwell, no James Agee and Walker Evans, no Michael Harrington, no John Steinbeck, no Edward R. Murrow.

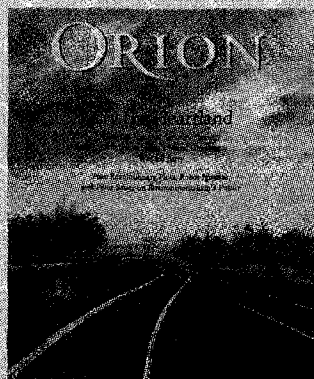
Something else in addition to poverty's invisibility that harks back to the first Gilded Age is the widening economic disparity between the rich and poor. During the Reagan presidency, the poor lost tremendous ground. And during the Clinton presidency, the rich did fabulously well. In 1998 the top 1 percent of households collected almost 17 percent of the nation's income. And now Bush is proposing a tax cut that gives the richest 5 percent of taxpayers most of the economic gain. This is a class-warfare policy of shooting the wounded and looting the amputees.

What is amazing is that this expansion of inequality took place without ever becoming a noticeable issue in American politics. This growing concentration of wealth has given the superrich domination over politics through extravagant campaign contributions and media ownership, which has made large elements of the media sound like Republican echo chambers. The increasing gap between rich and poor and the erosion of democracy by vast wealth are not hot-button talk-show issues because so few politi-

the nature of change

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In the March/April
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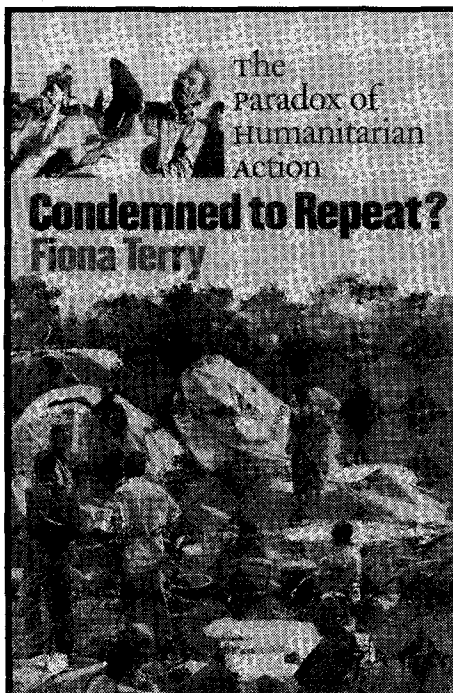
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cians with a national following agitate about them with continuing conviction. Only Ted Kennedy, John McCain and the late Paul Wellstone come to mind. None of the leading Democrats seeking the 2004 presidential nomination are talking about the maldistribution of wealth or mobilizing a new war on poverty or a massive jobs program. Cerebral, suburban Gary Hart was quoted in a February 2 *New York Times Magazine* profile as saying: "How do you make the principles of equality and justice and fairness work in a time when everyone's well off?" I would gladly take Hart on a tour of New York's communities of sorrow.

I conceived this piece as a way to dramatize the growth of poverty in liberal, pro-labor New York City. But there is also a bigger, national picture that frames the local reporting. This big picture has many layers. It is not only the Republican ascendancy in Washington, Albany and the courts. It is not just the capitulating silences of Democrats. It is not just the fading power of the AFL-CIO. It is not just the historical forces well beyond New York's capacity to influence—like global terrorism, the recessions of the business cycle, the bursting of the Internet technology bubble, the crushing state and city deficits made worse by Bush's radicalism for the rich. It's all of the above and more. For all of New York's real estate, banking, media, marketing and cultural power—and for all its mystique—it is still just a cork bobbing on the ocean of capitalism.

Only during FDR's New Deal was economic disparity significantly reduced. More recently, in addition to the dramatic redistribution of income upward, wealth (property, investments, stocks, bonds and other assets) has become even more concentrated in a few hands than income is. The wealthy fared as well under Clinton as they did under Grover Cleveland—also a Democrat—during the original Gilded Age. The top 5 percent of Americans now own almost 60 percent of the country's wealth—the same 5 percent who would receive most of the benefit from Bush's proposed tax cut.

Downward mobility is the hot new trend in the city of buzz and billionaires. By every measure, unemployment, homelessness and hunger are on the rise in New York. In December, unemployment jumped up to 8.4 percent, the highest it has been in five years, the highest of any of the country's big cities. New York has lost 176,000 jobs in the past two years, more than any other city. Today more than 1.6 million New Yorkers (20.2 percent of the population) are living below the federal poverty line; another 13 percent are barely above it.

And, as always, poverty is more severe among people of color. Blacks and Latinos comprise 47.5 percent of the city's labor force but account for 61.2 percent of the jobless. The city's poverty rate is 25 percent for blacks, 28 percent for Hispanics and 12 percent for whites. It's been double for people of color for generations. There are now 38,000 homeless people in city shelters each winter night—and 17,000 of them are children. Homelessness has increased by 82 percent since 1998. In 2002 the city's network of 1,000 soup kitchens and food pantries affiliated with the New York Food Bank—many faith-based—fed 45 percent more hungry people than they did two years earlier. And about 90 percent of these hungry people are not homeless, and do have a history of work.

"Hunger among the working poor is a growing trend," Joel Berg, the director of the Coalition Against Hunger, told me.

"It's caused by skyrocketing rents, a minimum wage that has been stagnant at \$5.15 an hour since 1997, rising costs for health insurance and the city restricting access to food stamps while Giuliani was mayor." Every day the city's soup kitchens and food pantries provide about 1 million people with meals. The Coalition Against Hunger reports that because of increased demand, in 2001, the soup kitchens and food pantries have had to turn away 350,000 New Yorkers—including 85,000 children.

Every Thursday morning, at the Yorkville Common Pantry, on 109th Street in East Harlem, there is a long line of silent, dejected women with shopping carts, waiting for fresh meats and canned goods to be distributed by volunteers when the doors open at 11:30 AM. On my occasional visits to this line, I saw that most of these Hispanic women were mothers with children who had sporadic histories of at least part-time work. I also met a recent Russian immigrant who had no coat and a woman attending some night classes who had lost her job, exhausted her health insurance and suffered serious depression but could not afford the medication to treat it. Her grandest dream, she said, is "to move to a safer block."

New York's economy has declined for seven consecutive quarters. Consumer confidence is vaporizing. Inflation is rising faster than wages. Personal bankruptcies are up as a consequence of credit-card debt and predatory lending by the jackals of recession. And to make future prospects even darker, the state has a \$10 billion budget deficit while the city's is \$3 billion, at a time when the President is refusing to assist the states. New York City now faces state-imposed transit-fare increases, college tuition increases and a \$1.2 billion cut in state education funding.

The Low-Wage World

Most poor people work. The roughly \$10,700 a year that \$5.15-an-hour minimum-wage jobs pay is without question not sufficient to hold a family together in New York. But a big part of the city's poverty crisis is the World of Low-Wage Work, just above the legal minimum—"McJobs," as organizers call them. There are hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who are trapped in such jobs, from which they can be fired or lose shifts on the whim of a supervisor, at big chain franchises like McDonald's, Tower Records, Duane Reade drugstores and Gristedes supermarkets.

In testimony before the City Council on behalf of a living-wage bill, David Jones, president of the Community Service Society, a nonprofit social service agency, said that "one-in-five New York workers earns less than \$8.10 an hour. Three-quarters of those earning less than \$8.10 an hour are living in poverty." According to a comprehensive CSS study, 52.6 percent of low-wage workers are women; six out of ten have a high school diploma; and more than one in ten is a college graduate. Eight in ten are people of color. They are not teenagers working part-time jobs or subsidized members of middle-income households. More than 90 percent of

those trapped in low-wage jobs are adults. More than 75 percent are now working full-time. They are not substance abusers, alcoholics or the mentally ill.

More than 600,000 New Yorkers earn between \$5.15 an hour and \$10 an hour. Some 56 percent of these low-wage workers have no health insurance for their families, 52 percent have no pension or 401(k) plan and 37 percent receive no paid leave. The CSS survey found that 27 percent of these workers fell behind in rent payments during the past year, 18 percent had their utilities shut off and 14 percent had to postpone necessary medical treatment. This low-wage world includes busboys, waitresses, janitors, food-service workers, store clerks, security guards, porters, maids, home health aides, day laborers and deliverymen. In late January, a federal judge in Manhattan ruled that more than 200 deliverymen were being paid less than \$3 an hour by the Duane Reade drugstore chain. Most of these workers are immigrants from West Africa; as a group, they had been cheated out of \$1 million in back pay.

A political tragedy is that only three unions are aggressively trying to organize the most underpaid workers: Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union, Local 32BJ, also of the SEIU, and the Hotel Trades Council, which is unionizing maids, housekeepers and employees of private clubs. Without the protection of unionization, collective bargaining and job security, low-wage workers are powerless in this savage season of high unemployment and intense competition for bad jobs. The simultaneous trend of Republican electoral ascendancy shoves these low-wage workers into a deeper hole, since Republican policies like tax cuts for the rich and budget cuts for the poor increase poverty and diminish the standard of living.

But late last year, the overwhelmingly Democratic City Council did pass two important laws to protect low-wage workers. They were enacted mostly because of the intense lobbying and targeted campaign donations of Local 1199 and Local 32BJ. First, the Council passed a compromise version of the living-wage law that gave 50,000 home healthcare workers—Local 1199 members—a minimum wage of \$8.10 an hour if they have health insurance, \$9.60 if not. This will become \$10 an hour by 2006. The law covers employees of companies that receive homecare contracts from the city government—the basis for the legislative jurisdiction over wages. The scope of the bill was narrowed during negotiations between Council Speaker Gifford Miller and Mayor Mike Bloomberg, with about 2,000 building and other service workers deleted from coverage. But Local 32BJ got something else in return that they desired almost as much. This was the Displaced Building Service Worker Protection Act, which requires landlords, managers and contractors of newly acquired commercial properties of fifty units or more to retain on the payroll all union and nonunion workers for a ninety-day grace period.

32BJ was a notoriously corrupt union a few years ago. But now, under president Mike Fishman, and with an engaged membership of 70,000, it made its presence felt at the City Council. Every time there was a hearing on this bill, there were seventy-five or a hundred union members in purple union T-shirts, filling the chamber. A recent court-authorized wiretap recorded unsolicited praise for this union under Fishman's leadership. A

Jack Newfield is a senior fellow at the Nation Institute. His latest book is The Full Rudy: The Man, the Myth, the Mania (Nation Books).

Genovese crime family capo known as “Sammy Meatballs” was overheard talking about the union. “It’s a very good union for the men,” the gangster was complaining. “Y’know what I mean? Usually whoever belongs to it don’t want to give that up. The men get treated good and they get good salaries.” In the bad old days, this union was in collusion with the mob, selling labor peace and signing sweetheart contracts that screwed the membership. Now Local 32BJ is starting to demonstrate that even in this harsh economic and political climate, a democratic union can make a positive difference.

The difficulty is that too many private-sector unions are too timid or too much a part of the Establishment to hire the best organizers, think big, take risks and embrace an activist mission. Fishman, Dennis Rivera of Local 1199 and Peter Ward, the leader of the Hotel and Motel Trades Union Council, are the exceptions. Unfortunately, they don’t have the jurisdiction to organize the exploited workers at the large nonunion chains.

It is hard for people in low-wage jobs to break out of the cycle of poverty. They obey the law, pay their bills, try to improve their education, stay away from drugs—and they still remain where they are, in bad jobs and in bad neighborhoods. Unionization is almost the equivalent of the lottery for them. When I asked Fishman about his philosophy of unionism, he replied: “Our power comes from our ability to take to the street. It is the only power we have. We can create chaos. I believe unions have to risk everything every day. I know our members are always one contract away from destitution.”

Chinatown

Every evening at about 7:30, a van from the Coalition for the Homeless stops on the fringe of Chinatown in lower Manhattan. And every evening about fifty or sixty women step out of the shadows to receive a free meal of hot soup, fruit and bread in polite silence. They almost all had seamstress jobs in garment sweatshops or worked in restaurants before 9/11. Now they barely survive on family help, extensions of unemployment insurance and charity. Most of them live doubled up, or tripled up, in Chinatown, which has by far the highest population density of any New York neighborhood: 189 people per acre compared with eighty-two people per acre in the rest of Manhattan.

Chinatown—located a mile from Ground Zero—was also the community hardest hit by the terrorist attack. Because of security checkpoints, traffic congestion during the season in which garments had to be trucked and a sudden drop in tourism, Chinatown’s economy collapsed in the weeks after 9/11. Sixty-five garment factories in the neighborhood closed in the year after the attack. Three-quarters of Chinatown’s work force temporarily lost their jobs in the weeks after the attack, according to the Asian American Federation, a community advocacy group. Although Chinatown employees were only about 1 percent of New York City’s work force, they suffered 10 percent of the unemployment caused by the calamity. Even three months after 9/11, the Asian American Federation estimates, about 8,000 Chinatown workers were still unemployed. Making all this worse is Chinatown’s immigrant character. This includes a cash-based economy, a dearth of documentation and credit histories that are needed for government or charitable assistance, and many middle-aged work-

ers with a limited command of English. Chinatown also suffers from internal political feuds and divisions. Moreover, most of Chinatown’s housing stock dates back to the nineteenth century.

Because of all this disproportionate deprivation, the city’s Department of Business Services commissioner, Rob Walsh, nominated Chinatown to be one of the state’s new Empire Zones, which would provide lower taxes and cheaper utilities to attract new businesses, creating jobs. But in December 2002 the city’s application for Chinatown was rejected by Governor Pataki. He chose six upstate and rural areas to be designated as Empire Zones, but not the city’s neighborhood most in need of help. The last economic development zone selected by Pataki was upstate Rensselaer County, which happens to be represented by Joe Bruno, the GOP majority leader of the State Senate. Chinatown happens to be part of the district represented by Democrat Sheldon Silver, Speaker of the Assembly. As Tip O’Neill said, “All politics is local.” Walsh was outraged. He told me, “This is wrong. When you analyze the numbers of poverty, of job losses, of the concentration of small businesses that are hurting, there is no comparison between the needs of Chinatown and the needs of well-to-do Rensselaer County. Chinatown is the hardest-hit community in the whole state.” New York City contains 40 percent of the state’s population but has only ten of the state’s seventy-two Empire Zones.

The two Georges—Pataki and Bush—seem to harbor some deep resentment against New York City, and keep denying the city the revenue and assistance it deserves. Pataki’s hostility seems to be primarily political—the city is predominantly Democratic in state elections and Pataki has never carried it. The President’s antagonism seems deeper and more personal. Bush is the evangelical cowboy for whom New York seems to be emblematic of the diversity, cultural experimentation, religious pluralism, individual freedom, social programs and now antiwar feeling that he loathes. Friends of mine who knew Bush well when he was the owner of the Texas Rangers baseball franchise say that even then, early in his intolerant, born-again fanaticism, he made disparaging remarks about New York in the context of welfare, drugs, immigration and disorder. So even as Bush exploited the patriotic passions unleashed by the mass murder of 9/11, he did not do anything to rescue a community like Chinatown, or help with Medicaid, or revenue sharing, or block grants to the state, or education funds to make the city whole.

Cheating the Poor Out of Food Stamps

About 800,000 city residents are eligible for food stamps, but do not receive them. During Mayor Rudolph Giuliani’s second term, barriers to access were intentionally created, causing a 42 percent drop in recipients. A federal judge, the federal Agriculture Department and Governor Pataki’s social service commissioner all found that poor people were being denied access improperly. City officials were claiming to visitors that they had no applications. The applications that were distributed were sixteen pages long and unnecessarily complex. Other bureaucratic games were played to discourage participation in the program. Giuliani’s administration fostered a subtle culture of rejection.

Giuliani came to see—and speak of—food stamps as a costly “welfare program” that increased what he called “a culture of dependency.” But in fact, food stamps were started as a nutrition

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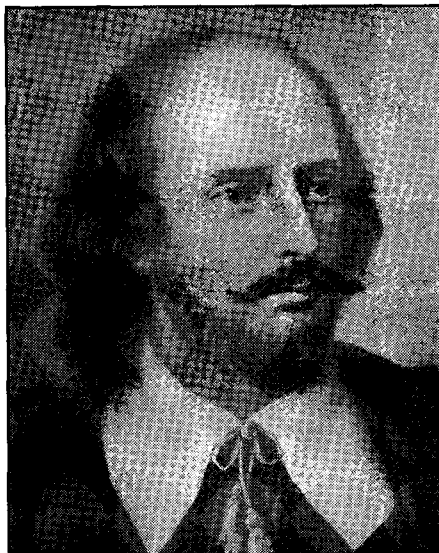
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program to combat hunger. The program's original federal sponsors included Republican senators from farm states, like Bob Dole, who saw the program as assisting their home state economies through subsidized urban food purchases.

In November 2002, with food pantries swamped by rising demand, New York City somehow removed 11,000 qualified people from the food stamp program. City officials quickly admitted this was a mistake—paperwork errors causing delays in recertifications. The City Council then dispatched undercover investigators to the offices where food stamp applications are supposed to be easily available to the public. But one-third of these undercover testers were sent away without applications, even when they were insistent with clerks and bureaucrats. These rejections were a clear violation of the law. At a December 16, 2002, City Council public hearing, the city's Human Resources commissioner, Verna Eggleston, and her deputy, Giuliani holdover Seth Diamond, told the stunned Councilmembers they were concerned about the cost of enrolling more recipients. They seemed indifferent to the fact that food stamps are often the last barrier between crying children and the cramps of hunger. The chairman of the Council's committee, Bill de Blasio of Brooklyn, reminded the commissioner that not only is the program 100 percent federally funded but that the federal government also pays half of the city's administrative costs.

Only malice, or the most wretched incompetence, could explain the city's failure to provide food stamps to half the city's poor population. Food stamps add at most \$4,000 of food to the table of a family living on less than \$15,000 a year. They also recycle the money immediately back into the poor community's economy of supermarkets and bodegas. And if every poor New Yorker who is eligible received food stamps, it would inject almost \$1 billion in federal benefits into the city's economy. Food stamps are the mother of all win/win propositions. At the Council's hearing, de Blasio asked commissioner Eggleston, "Why is it you can find someone when there is a problem, but you can't find someone when you have a benefit to offer them?"

Homeless Children and 'Generous Anger'

When the economy is strong, the homeless population contracts. When the economy is weak, the homeless population expands. The Emergency Assistance Unit—the gateway homeless intake office in the Bronx—is a more reliable economic barometer than the computerized Dow Jones. When mothers and children applying for shelter are sleeping on the floor, or on desks in the office, you know the economy is lousy.

With the recession now in its third year, New York's homeless population is larger than it has ever been. In the late 1980s the shelter population peaked at 28,700. Now it is 38,200. More than 85 percent of the city's homeless population are families, including 17,000 children. Forty percent of these nomadic children suffer from asthma and have no regular doctor. Two years ago, so many mothers with young children started showing up at the office of the Coalition for the Homeless that a playspace and toys were added to the waiting room.

A year ago, with the help of advocates and union members, I was able to sneak into the EAU office. It was something straight out of Dickens or Jacob Riis. Desperate mothers and crying chil-

dren with running noses were searched for contraband. With the shelter system clogged, the homeless often had to sleep in these offices for two or three days under bright lights before being offered a place to stay. A court order precluding applicants from sleeping overnight in the EAU was routinely violated. Seeing this place gave me a feeling of "generous anger"—the phrase Orwell invoked to describe Dickens's writing about the poorhouse.

To be sure, not all of the homeless want help. These days the street homeless seem to be "more hard-core than before," in the words of Patrick Markee, the senior policy analyst for the coalition, who also helps deliver meals to them on many nights. Based on my own interviews, most of the single adult men on the streets don't want social services, medication or Medicare. They prefer to be left alone. Many appear to suffer from serious mental problems, but the state does not provide nearly enough supportive housing units for the mentally ill. This group does not like shelters; they prefer sleeping in subways or in the waiting room of the Staten Island Ferry terminal in winter. Some of these street people tell me they have been homeless for years. They profess no interest in job training, medication or counseling. They present an intractable problem that seems immune to charity, common sense or romantic liberalism.

Every governmental attempt to ameliorate poverty seems to attract its own breed of parasite and leech. New York has had scandals involving poverty programs, community school boards, nursing home operators and Medicaid fraud, kickbacks to politicians for helping get state contracts for drug and alcohol rehab facilities, and politicians monopolizing twenty-year no-bid care leases. Now there are rapacious landlords getting paid by the city to house homeless families. This racket started as a temporary experiment under Mayor Giuliani in August 2000 but grew to 2,000 apartments, dozens of landlords and millions of dollars paid to them out of the city's treasury. The city has been paying these landlords an average of \$2,900 a month—a total of \$33 million since last July. But the volume of the homeless flood is so large that the city has no time to verify the backgrounds of these bottom-feeder landlords and the conditions of their squalid apartments. One complex of buildings, where the Human Resources Administration placed 260 families, had so many hazardous and unsanitary violations of the building code that a judge took ownership away from the landlord and placed the complex in receivership. Tenants of another Brooklyn complex have sued, charging that they were evicted so their landlord could rent to 125 homeless families.

There are two silver linings on the horizon. In December, Mayor Bloomberg announced an ambitious five-year plan to build or rehabilitate 60,000 units of low- and middle-income housing, some of which would be set aside for the homeless. Bloomberg also doubled the number of rent vouchers and public housing apartments immediately available to homeless families. And on January 17 the Bloomberg administration and advocates for the homeless, led by the Legal Aid Society, reached an agreement that settled twenty years of rancorous litigation. This agreement codified the existing court order requiring the city to provide shelter to the homeless as a permanent legal right. It also granted to the city the authority to eject from the shelter system—whenever the temperature was above freezing—people who refused an appropriate apartment or engaged in misconduct like assault or theft.

The Frontier of the Possible

Michael Harrington, the author of *The Other America* and my mentor, used to recommend "locating the frontier of the possible" when it came to devising a strategy to shrink poverty. A recent frontier-defining survey by the Community Service Society disclosed a broad common agenda shared by the poor and middle-income and even high-income voters. This included raising the minimum wage, national health insurance, a larger investment in public education and more affordable housing. (Affordable housing was the highest priority among low-income voters.)

The November 2002 local elections did offer some hopeful signs that can be duplicated. The intransigently progressive State Senator Liz Krueger was re-elected on Manhattan's Upper East Side, in a district that had been held by a Republican for thirty years. Krueger was outspent by her Republican opponent, Andrew Eristoff, by six to one but was elected by a margin of almost 60-40. In terms of advocating for the poor and creating coalitions, Krueger is the frontier of the possible in electoral politics. The new union-based Working Families Party received 90,000 votes statewide, winning a permanent position on the ballot and serious leverage in swing districts. David Paterson was elected New York's first black party leader in the state legislature, as rank-and-file Democrats in the State Senate revolted and threw out Martin Connor as their leader. Paterson then named maverick Eric Schneiderman as his deputy. Schneiderman had survived a Republican and Democratic deal to end his career by redistricting him into a Hispanic district, where it was hoped he would lose a primary. But Schneiderman prevailed, with the support of the heavily black and Latino healthcare workers' union Local 1199/SEIU.

There is also little doubt that the near-suburbs are trending Democratic. The black and Latino populations of Nassau and Westchester counties are growing. If the Democrats can gain six seats in the State Senate over the next six years, they can become the majority. Paterson, Krueger, the WFP and organizer Jonathan Rosen of the New York Unemployment Project are now planning exactly such a long-term strategy of grassroots membership organizing and registering of low-income voters in the suburbs.

I hear a lot of talk about how "all we need" is one good liberal talk-show host on network radio or cable television, or all we need is a liberal policy think tank to compete with the conservative Manhattan Institute with its easy access to op-ed pages. But I think the frontier of the possible is also community-based organizing, the grunt drudgery of real voter registration and a renewed union militancy on behalf of the nickel-and-dimed low-wage workers. We need phone banks and Spanish-speaking union organizers as much as we need a left-wing Limbaugh.

Change comes from the bottom up. Change comes from ordinary people in political motion. This has been true from the 1936-37 sit-down auto factory strike in Flint, Michigan, to the strike-filled rise of New York's garment, transit and healthcare unions, to the marchers from Selma to Montgomery, who wrote the 1965 Voting Rights Act with their mud-caked boots, to today's growing antiwar movement.

The message of history is that only a participatory democracy can challenge a predatory plutocracy. ■

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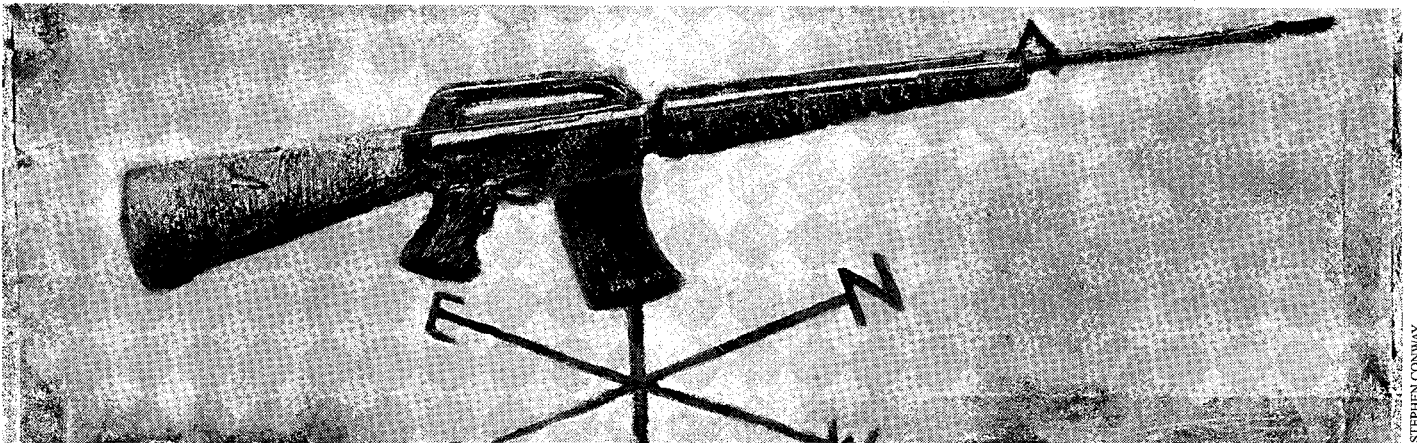
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IRAN WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE SADDAM HUSSEIN OVERTHROWN. BUT BOTH REGIME OFFICIALS AND THEIR OPPONENTS HAVE REASON TO FEAR WHAT MIGHT COME AFTERWARD.



STEPHEN CONWAY

A Triangle of Realpolitik: Iran, Iraq and the United States

MANSOUR FARHANG

Since the 9/11 calamity, there have been two instances of cooperation between Iran and the United States, once during the assault on the Taliban and then in the course of preparation to attack Iraq. In both cases, a convergence of interests compelled Washington and Teheran to put their exchange of hostile words within brackets and focus on the foe. In the current situation, Iran's long border with Iraq makes the country useful to the American military; and Washington's determination to overthrow Saddam Hussein is most welcome in Teheran. This semi-veiled bedfellowship is based on sharing an enemy and the desire to eliminate him at any price. Therefore, once Saddam Hussein is dead or exiled, the temporary marriage will be annulled. Washington will shift the spotlight to Iran and its nuclear program; and the reigning ayatollahs will resume their condemnation of US presence in the Persian Gulf as a threat to Iran's independence and religious identity.

Since early November 2002, Iran and the United States have been quietly discussing specific measures to deal with military emergencies and the flow of refugees if/when the United States attacks Iraq. These are similar to the arrangements they made when the United States ousted the Taliban regime from Afghanistan. Diplomats from small Arab states in the Persian Gulf and Ayatollah Mohammad Baqer al-Hakim, the leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, representing the largest dissident group of Iraqi Shiite Muslims based in Teheran, are involved as intermediaries. The ayatollah, who has been living in Iran since 1980 and is closely tied to Iran's ruling clerics, receives US funds for mobilizing anti-Saddam Shiites. He actually wants the US military to overthrow Saddam and then

leave Iraq to the Iraqis, who, according to Ayatollah al-Hakim, could be guided to establish an Islamic republic patterned after the one created by his mentor, the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Al-Hakim commands several thousand Iraqi rebel troops stationed on Iranian soil near Iraq. These forces have been trained and equipped by Iran's Revolutionary Guards. In the event of US military action against Iraq, al-Hakim's forces could move, if Washington and Teheran consider it necessary, to prevent possible Iraqi use of the border areas. Once the war ends, however, al-Hakim will have to choose, for all practical purposes, between one leg of the "axis of evil" and the "Great Satan." It is virtually certain that he will do what is necessary to win favor from the US military or civilian administrator in Baghdad.

To show good faith to Washington, Iran has ended its lax attitudes toward Iraqi oil smugglers operating along its Persian Gulf shoreline and has begun to implement United Nations sanctions restricting Iraqi oil sales since 1991. According to Vice Adm. Timothy Keating, the coordinator for the US naval force charged with stemming the flow of illegal Iraqi oil sales, in 2002 Iraqis smuggled a lot less oil than they did the previous year. Keating attributed the change, at least in part, to "an apparent change in Iranian policy to restrict smugglers from using Iranian waters."

Furthermore, Iran has just completed nineteen temporary camps along its 730-mile border with Iraq in preparation for the inevitable flow of refugees to its territory if/when the war starts. Special UN agencies have helped the Iranian government to build these camps, which are situated just a few yards inside Iranian territory because, as Interior Minister Abdolvahed Mus-savi Lari put it, Iran does not want Iraqis fleeing conflict to travel too far into Iran. "If war happens," he said, "with the assistance of international organizations we are ready to offer humanitarian

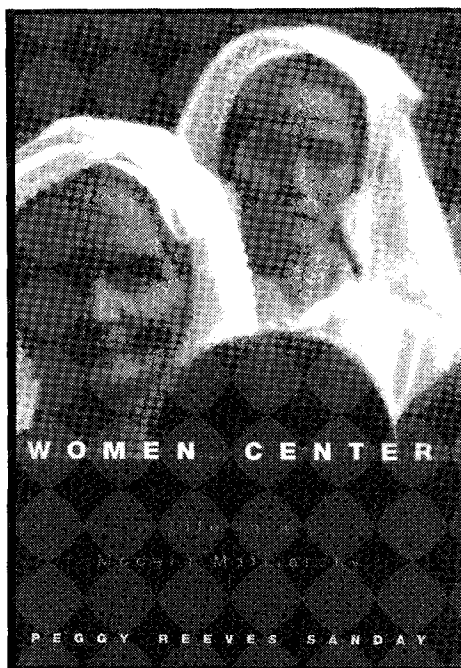
Mansour Farhang is a professor of politics at Bennington College.

aid at the border." During the decade following the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Iran became the home for 2.5 million Afghan refugees. And in the aftermath of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, around 1 million Iraqi Kurds and Shiites fled to Iran. An estimated 200,000 of them are still there. Iran is keen to avoid a repeat of this flood of refugees into its territory.

Although in early February Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi said that "Iran is basically against war and is not going to support either side," private meetings between Bush Administration officials and Iranian representatives were held in Europe. The US envoy requested Iranian help in rescuing downed US pilots and in preventing Iraqi units that flee to Iran from regrouping and mounting attacks. Teheran's rulers certainly favor regime change in Iraq, but they are worried about the possible disintegration of Iraq into ethnic and confessional groupings. They believe that prolonged violent conflict among competing forces will inevitably lead to the use of Iranian territory as sanctuary or staging grounds for rival fighters. Under such circumstances, Iran will try to assist the forces of Ayatollah al-Hakim while claiming to be neutral. Iraq without Saddam Hussein offers Iran an opportunity to extend its influence there. Shiites constitute 60 percent of Iraq's population and are heavily concentrated in the southern part of the country. Iran's theocrats have close ties to some leading Shiite clerics, and they are hard at work to increase their influence on the politics of anti-Saddam groups.

In mid-January, when Iraqi opposition leaders, because of US refusal to support them, postponed a scheduled meeting in the Kurdish-controlled zone in northern Iraq, Iran "offered to have the meeting on its territory if the dissidents wanted to stick to the originally scheduled date," according to the *New York Times*. The Iraqis turned down the formal offer, but ten days later, another *Times* story reported, more than a dozen of them "quietly gathered in Iran to prepare their entry into northern Iraq." Such well-known Iraqi dissidents as Ahmad Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress, and Kanan Makiya, a Brandeis University professor, were included in the delegation. According to Elaine Sciolino, the *Times* correspondent in Teheran, the Iraqis met with "senior officials in agencies like the Revolutionary Guards and the security and intelligence apparatus." Chalabi and Makiya are democracy advocates for their country, but they apparently do not mind using and being used by ruthless theocrats on the way to their promised land. Needless to say, Teheran's reigning ayatollahs have their own agenda for post-Saddam Iraq. They will assist their Shiite allies politically and financially without overtly pushing their theocracy as a model for Iraq. As experienced managers of power, they are well aware that in the current political climate of the region, being perceived as exporters of Islamic revolution could bring them the combined wrath of the United States and its Arab allies.

In August 2, 1990, the day Iraq invaded Kuwait, the equations of power and calculations of interest in the Middle East underwent a sea change. Operation Desert Storm produced a mixed blessing for Iran. The destruction of Iraq's offensive capability was cause for relief in Teheran, but the subsequent US pre-eminence in the region became a source of humiliation for the ruling clerics. Nevertheless, during the 1990s, although disturbed about the US military presence in the Persian Gulf region, Iran was a clear beneficiary of US determination to contain Saddam



Women at the Center

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Hussein. Another irony of Desert Storm, as sweet for Iran as it was bitter for Iraq, occurred when Iraq sought refuge for its fighter planes in Iran to avoid US missile attacks. Teheran authorities welcomed the move and lost no time in appropriating them as partial payment of reparations for the 1980–88 war with Iraq.

After the Gulf War, Washington chose to replace its pro-Saddam, or balance-of-power, approach to Iran and Iraq with a “dual containment” policy, intended to prevent the hegemony of either country in the region. President Clinton abandoned this policy at the beginning of his second term and tried to engage Iran in dialogue. Iran was in the process of normalizing its relations with European and Arab states (except Iraq) and thus could have been open to official contact with Washington, but US officials’ focus on reformist President Mohammad Khatami, as distinguished from the clerical regime, and their repeated references to factional rivalry in Iran so displeased the Islamic Republic’s real power-holders that they decided to reject Clinton’s conciliatory gestures as interference in Iran’s internal affairs.

Before September 11, 2001, Iran’s rulers expected the Bush Administration to discard the Clinton/Albright fixation on President Khatami and adopt a more flexible attitude toward the theocratic regime. They thought US oil companies, which long to return to Iran, could persuade the oilman in the White House to make peace with the Islamic Republic. They were also encouraged by the fact that Dick Cheney, before becoming Bush’s running mate, had characterized unilateral sanctions on Iran as harmful to US interests. Cheney pointed out that foreign oil and gas companies ignore the sanctions, while US firms are barred from competing for lucrative contracts. Moreover, soon after Bush’s inauguration, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Iranian Foreign Minister Kharrazi sent some signals to each other about the possibility of improving relations between the two countries.

In a January 2001 press conference in Rome, Kharrazi suggested that “the transition of power in the White House has presented an opportunity for the new Administration to make changes in the failed US policies toward Iran.” He asked Washington to stop “meddling in Iran’s internal affairs” and allow US firms to invest in Iran. In return, he continued, “Iran can play a crucial role in creating peace, security and economic prosperity in the region.”

On the day of 9/11, President Khatami sent his condolences to Washington, and Powell described Khatami’s message as “positive signals” from Iran. Powell said the Iranians, too, “are shocked by what happened, they tell us. And so it seems to me that is an opening worth exploring.” Thus it seemed that Iran and the United States were moving toward ending their bitter estrangement through a common desire to oust the Taliban and support Afghanistan’s opposition forces, which had received military and financial assistance from Iran after their abandonment by Washington following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The “axis of evil” bombshell changed the perceptions of the players. Iran’s rulers felt confused when President Bush put them in the company of Iraq and North Korea. They could not make sense of the move, because they were known to be against both Al

Qaeda and the Taliban. Indeed, they had opposed the Taliban long before Washington did and almost fought a war with them in August 1998. When the US bombardment of Afghanistan began, in October 2001, Iran went so far as preparing to aid in rescuing US pilots if the need arose. It also played a constructive role in the December 2001 Bonn conference on the future of Afghanistan and pledged a significant amount of aid for the renewal of the country. The new Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, visited Teheran and met with all the leading ayatollahs. Six months later, Iranian President Khatami went to Kabul and reiterated Iran’s support for Karzai and his efforts to unify Afghanistan.

The pressure to name Iran as part of the axis of evil could only have come from Pentagon hard-liners and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s chief supporters in the Bush Administration—Vice President Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Rumsfeld’s deputy Paul Wolfowitz—against the preference of the State Department. Sharon and his right-wing allies are adamantly opposed to normalization of US-Iranian relations. They are worried about Iran becoming a nuclear-weapons state and see no prospect of dialogue with its clerical rulers. Thus Sharon wants Bush to deal with Iran in the same way he is dealing with Iraq. In fact, right-wing Israelis and their

advocates in Washington consider the ayatollahs’ Iran a more dangerous enemy than Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. Last November Sharon, in an exclusive interview with the

Israel’s Sharon has openly called on the United States and Britain to ‘attack Iran once they are finished with Iraq.’

Times of London, described the Islamic Republic as “a center of world terror” and openly called upon the United States and Britain to “attack Iran once they are finished with Iraq.” He no doubt wants the United States to install the late Shah’s son, Reza Pahlavi, as ruler.

Israel believes Iran can produce a few nuclear weapons within five years and develop medium-range missiles capable of reaching Tel Aviv. Moreover, the daily Arabic-language programs of Iran’s state-owned radio and television broadcasting system, tailored to appeal to general publics in Arab countries, portray Israel as an illegitimate and aggressive usurper of Muslim land. Thus Israel sees Iran as a serious threat to its security in the short run and a potential geopolitical rival in the long run. At present, Israel’s long-range fighters can bomb Iran without fearing retaliation. Sharon itches to strike while this imbalance exists, but he is aware that bombing will not bring about regime change. In fact, aerial attacks on Iran’s military and industrial targets will unify the clerical rulers and worsen the already deplorable human rights situation in the country (for a comprehensive and fully documented study of the Islamic Republic’s human rights record, see Reza Afshari’s *Human Rights in Iran: The Abuse of Cultural Relativism*).

The only conceivable way to overthrow the Islamic regime through external military force is to invade Iran with hundreds of thousands of troops. Only the United States has such a capacity, and Sharon is hoping to persuade President Bush to undertake the mission while his forces are in the region—preferably “the day after” he “finishes off Saddam Hussein,” he told the *Times*. Ranan Lurie, a senior associate at the Center for Strategic and

International Studies in Washington, approvingly explains Sharon's argument for popular audiences as follows:

It is inconceivable that [the US] will attack Iraq, succeed, destroy its unconventional laboratories and arsenal, come home for a ticker-tape parade on Wilshire Boulevard and go to the beaches while Iran is still there. Imagine a brain surgeon penetrating the skull of a patient who has two malignant tumors and yet extracting only one of them. Logic says that, as long as you are in that skull, the same incision should serve for the removal of the second tumor.

In this instance, even some Pentagon hawks and neoconservative missionaries will be too shy to translate Sharon's wishes into a proposal for action, but people like Elliott Abrams, President Bush's special adviser on the Middle East, and Michael Rubin, Iran/Iraq adviser for the Defense Department, may well be inclined to push for the idea. Both men have close ties to right-wing and neoconservative Washington lobbyists for Israel's Likud coalition.

When Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, Ayatollah Khomeini called Saddam Hussein "a pro-American mercenary" and "an infidel." He was not a US mercenary, but he certainly received Washington's blessing and material assistance to fight the ayatollah. In 1983, three years into the Iran-Iraq fratricide, Donald Rumsfeld was chosen as a special presidential envoy to strengthen US-Iraqi relations. As Michael Dobbs of the *Washington Post* has recently learned, "Declassified documents show that Rumsfeld traveled to Baghdad at a time when Iraq was using chemical

weapons on an 'almost daily' basis in defiance of international conventions." Today, President Bush refers to Saddam Hussein's use of chemical bombs against Iranians and Iraqi Kurds as one of the reasons for the necessity of disarming him. The irony is not lost on the peoples of Iran and Iraq, but it is doubtful that many Americans are aware of this surreal shift in the position of their government.

Nevertheless, both Iran's authorities and ordinary citizens seem to hope the demise of Saddam Hussein will be the outcome of the current US-Iraqi crisis. What concerns both the theocrats and their secular opponents, in very different ways, is the fate of Iraq after his fall. Most Iranians feel ambivalent about the US plan for Iraq. The long history of US support for dictatorships in the Middle East does not leave much hope that the Bush Administration is interested in anything except access to cheap oil and creation of another client regime. Thus Iranians are anxiously waiting for the events to unfold. If post-Saddam Iraq turns out to show a propensity toward pluralism and democracy, Teheran's theocrats will panic while pro-democracy forces will be energized. On the other hand, if Iraq without a dictator disintegrates into warring enclaves, Iran's rulers, like other despots in the region, will once again proclaim, with more arrogance than ever before, that democracy is alien to the values and traditions of their domain. And if Washington, following its anticipated military takeover of Iraq, chooses the option of grooming a new dictator to replace Saddam Hussein, then the worst suspicions of Middle Easterners about the Bush Administration's imperial designs for the region will have been confirmed. ■

PENNSYLVANIA'S MINE RESCUE WAS INSPIRING, BUT THE REAL STORY WAS CORPORATE GREED.

Less Than Miraculous

CHARLES McCOLLESTER

Last summer the attention of the nation and the world was riveted by the rescue that brought nine Pennsylvania coal miners out of a mine in Somerset County. In a period of economic recession full of anxieties generated by the 9/11 attack, the gripping drama of the rescue provided an inspiring, positive moment for the nation. As investigations proceed, however, broader dimensions of the story are unveiled.

The most common characterization of the incident was "miraculous." In this conservative and religious rural area, a combination of the memory of many mining deaths, the dedication and commitment of the rescuers, and the solidarity of



STEPHEN CONWAY

the trapped men triggered an outpouring of church and community sentiment. The emotion of the moment was further intensified in the national media by the fact that the September 11 crash site of United Flight 93, with its well-promoted message of courage and solidarity in the face of death, was only thirteen miles away.

The flood of testimonials to the mercy of God threatens to obscure the very human factors that led to the near-disaster. In fact, the flooding of the nonunion mine reveals much about government inadequacy stemming from chronic underfunding; government incompetence and/or complicity with powerful vested interests; corporate irresponsibility and greed; and coordinated anti-union activity. God may well have had a hand in the rescue, but human avarice and more than a century of fierce corporate manipulation and struggle for profit and control were behind the wall of water that swept into the Quecreek mine.

Most of the investigations of the July 24, 2002, near-disaster undertaken to date have focused on the failure of the Pennsylvania

Charles McColester is the director of the Pennsylvania Center for the Study of Labor Relations at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He is the president of the Pennsylvania Labor History Society and secretary of the Battle of Homestead Foundation. Research for this article was contributed by IUP Labor Center graduate assistant Tim McGinnis.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to provide up-to-date mine maps. The discovery of a more recent map of previous mining than the one the state provided in 1999 when it issued a mining permit to Mincorp—sponsor of Black Wolf Coal Company, the actual operator of the mine—tended to exonerate Black Wolf owner-operator David Rebuck. Rebuck, a former Mincorp executive, even called the flooding an “act of God” in one local TV interview. In fact, Black Wolf had multiple warnings about the inadequacy of its 1957 map, drafted seven years before mining ended at the adjoining Saxman mine—the source of the Quecreek flood.

Carl Prine, a reporter for the *Greensburg Tribune-Review*, wrote right after the incident that “letters and public comment in 1999 from former miners, geochemists and farmers long experienced with groundwater and mine safety issues strongly urged state regulators to deny the Quecreek permit.” After the accident, one local resident, Jeffrey Bender, told the newspaper, “We all knew something like this would happen. We supported the miners and prayed for them, but we all knew what would happen, would happen. What’s frustrating for us is that we warned DEP and they seemed to be on the side of the mine, not us.”

After the disaster, several elderly former Saxman miners claimed on local television that they had gone to Black Wolf in the months just preceding the breach to warn the company that its map was inadequate and that Black Wolf was nearing the Saxman Coal Harrison #2 mine workings. Joseph Jashienski, a former Saxman foreman, told the *Tribune-Review* that he had alerted Black Wolf employees about the mine map inadequacies months earlier. More recently, Blaine Mayhugh, one of the trapped miners, said that Randy Fogle, their crew foreman, expecting imminent death, revealed that he had gone to Rebuck two weeks before the accident urging him to pull out. According to Mayhugh, Fogle told Rebuck “things were getting bad.”

When the accident happened, Rebuck claimed that the mine was normal and that state inspectors had visited recently. But Nick Molnar, a United Mine Workers organizer who was at the rescue, called me the following weekend and raised the question, If conditions were normal, why were all the rescued men wearing rain gear, and why had the mine’s pumps been running full bore prior to the water’s breakthrough? Indeed, one of the nine trapped miners, John Philippi, subsequently testified before Senator Arlen Specter’s labor appropriations subcommittee on October 21 that production had been greatly reduced in the days preceding the flood because of the supersaturated state of the mine. “The problem was water was coming down the roof,” Philippi testified. “The roof bolters couldn’t keep up. Everything was sloppy and wet. It [the roof] couldn’t hold the roof bolts.”

State and federal inspectors reportedly visited the mine the week before the flooding and noted the water, which they attributed in the DEP report on the accident to natural aquifers. Unlike the situation in a union mine, where inspectors would have been accompanied by worker-elected mine-safety reps who might well have insisted on asking workers their opinion about conditions,

the state inspectors reportedly did not hear any complaints about mining conditions. Union miners might well have insisted that test drilling precede mining in any border area as potentially dangerous as the approaching Saxman mine.

Advance drilling is a much more reliable method for establishing mine borders than mapping. It provides physical evidence onsite in real time, not historic evidence subject to bureaucratic incompetence or worse. Union miners at Saxman had been trained not to mine up-slope because of the flooding problems in the area. Quecreek miners were mining up-slope directly toward a large mine that available hydrological studies had shown was full of millions of gallons of water. The company had a drill machine, but it was not onsite.

The ultimate act of political cynicism was reserved for President Bush, who made a choreographed whistle-stop visit to the rescued miners on his way to a million-dollar campaign fundraiser in Pittsburgh. While his Administration has cut black lung benefits as well as funding and employees from the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration, he came to “celebrate life, the value of life and...the spirit of America.” Unwittingly, one paragraph of Bush’s remarks actually came close to defining the central issue: “They understood that they needed

Bush, who has cut funding for mine safety, cynically claimed he visited the miners to ‘celebrate life...the spirit of America.’

to rely upon each other, rely upon the strength of each. They huddled to keep warm; they said prayers to keep their spirits up. They understood they needed to tie together to

fight the underground current. It was their determination to stick together and to comfort each other that really defines kind of a new spirit that’s prevalent in our country, that when one of us suffers, all of us suffer; that in order to succeed, we’ve got to be united.”

United? How about the United Mine Workers of America? How about “an injury to one is an injury to all”? If Quecreek had been union, workers might have been more candid about company responsibility immediately after the rescue, when some of them supported management’s claim of normal mining conditions. If the union had been recognized, the workers could have refused to continue advancing—without fear for their jobs—as they saw conditions worsening.

In fact, three of the nine rescued miners had signed union cards in the past and were very aware of the price of trying to be united. Repeated attempts to organize Quecreek had broken down because the majority of the miners were intimidated. UMW organizer Nick Molnar (now retired) told me: “The company gets wind of our presence and first you get threats to fire individuals who support the union; that’s followed by veiled threats about closing the mine. In a depressed area, such actions are extremely effective.” Once issues of company negligence were raised and the attorney for most of the miners threatened to sue, local and national television gave voice to a company miner who criticized questions about the operation of the local coal industry, saying such exposure threatens the jobs and livelihood of those miners still working at Black Wolf and elsewhere.

Unfortunately that’s true. Coal mining in Somerset County is a tough and hard business, with the price of coal at under

\$30 a ton. While in the 1950s mining and steel provided 40 percent of the jobs in Somerset and adjoining Cambria counties, the major employers now are healthcare facilities, prisons and resorts, providing mostly low-wage jobs. Average earnings in Somerset County are \$23,153 a year; a nonunion miner averages almost \$34,000.

This past summer, Nick Molnar and I toured a 3,100-foot-deep German mine that produces government-subsidized coal at \$200 a ton; miners there retire at 50 with 95 percent of salary and free medical care. People conserve energy in Europe because it is not cheap. Quecreek Mine was run no worse than many other operations here and around the world. Unionism is fiercely resisted, among other reasons, because health and safety, adequate medical care and a decent retirement cost money.

Somerset County has been a battleground between the mine-workers union and anti-union operators for more than a century. Up in the northeast of the county a sharp controversy arose last summer and fall over the placement of a state-approved historical marker commemorating the bitter "Windber Strike for Union: 1922-3." The town of Windber was the operations center of the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, which once provided coal to New York City's commuter rail system. As the strike stretched for sixteen months, with miners' families, after being evicted from their homes, spending a winter in tents and makeshift shelters, the mayor of New York City sent a commission of inquiry. Its finding—that the condition of the striking miners was "worse than the conditions of the slaves prior to the Civil War"—was reported around the country.

The Berwind Group today is a billion-dollar company with nearly 4,000 employees, and Berwind Corporation, a subsidiary, is the largest landowner in Cambria and Somerset counties, owning approximately 35,000 acres. As its name indicates, Berwind is deeply involved in Windber. In December, after months of dispute, the Windber City Council approved the placement of the

marker in the town's Miners' Park, and sponsors dropped the reference to slavery. The UMWA plans to hold its traditional April 1 Mitchell Day rally in Windber to dedicate the marker.

Layers of ownerships and partnerships fill the space between hardscrabble operators like Black Wolf and the big corporate entities like Citigroup. The underground rights to the Quecreek coal are owned by PBS Coals (whose name is derived from Preston, Bedford and Somerset counties), a subsidiary of Mincorp, at one time itself a subsidiary of Burnett & Hallamshire of England. B&H bought PBS in the late 1980s with help from Kuwaiti investors, thus closing a historic circle: Andrew Mellon, who with his partner Henry Clay Frick controlled large swaths of the adjoining coalfields of Westmoreland and Fayette counties, picked up the oilfields of Kuwait for his Pittsburgh-based Gulf Oil Company while he was ambassador to England in the early 1930s. When B&H got into financial trouble, Mincorp was bought out by Citigroup. Legal firewalls limit the liability of the big corporations. Profits are taken off the top while responsibility is pushed relentlessly downstream. In fact, as the DEP report concludes, under Pennsylvania mining law, when an accident occurs, the foreman and superintendent shoulder the responsibility, and "the mine owner has virtually no responsibilities."

The outside world has lionized the nine trapped men. Disney dramatizes, *The New Yorker* extols, *Vanity Fair* markets them. The rescuers who lived on the site for three exhausting days and nights play cameo roles. But the second crew of nine miners who barely escaped are hardly mentioned. And beyond them are the tens of thousands of workers who daily go down into the earth under deteriorating conditions owing to global competition, unionbusting and governmental indifference. Television gave us a brief glimpse into the lives of the Pennsylvania miners, revealing their faith, courage and solidarity. The incident, however, should also inform the country about the real odds that they and their fellow miners are up against. ■

LETTERS

C O N T I N U E D

(Continued From Page 2)

who remind us that democracy requires a media system responsible to people's diverse needs and stories instead of the corporate bottom line. Last October hundreds of educators, media producers, public health officials and activists met in Albuquerque to found a new continental coalition dedicated to promoting media literacy education, indie media production and systemic reform of our corporate-owned mainstream media. With a wry grin, we call ourselves ACME—the Action Coalition for Media Education, and we are democratically governed and funded entirely by individual members—media TNCs need not apply. Inspired by a mix of keynote speakers—among them McChesney, activist Makani Themba-Nixon, filmmaker Sut Jhally, activist Jean Kilbourne, journalist Peter Clayton, activist Carrie McLaren, media policy visionary Jeff Chester—we are already lobbying the FCC, developing independent media literacy curricula, tapping into the public health sector's

expertise re media-related issues, and building regional chapters. Come join us! www.acme-coalition.org.

ROB WILLIAMS

DUBYA & CO.'S PRIOR RESTRAINT

Oakland, Calif.

■ Thank you for Patricia Williams's well-reasoned column of February 3. Although I ardently support war on Islamofascism, including its branch on the Tigris, she makes two good points: American inconsistency on allies' and our own abuses is only going to cause vital players to drop out or cop out. This fight is too important to waste energy making martyrs of US citizens and compromising our judicial system in the process. Granting Jose Padilla habeas corpus is no guarantee he'll even get bail.

While I don't find fighting fire with smart bombs nearly as foolish as does Williams, only the imprudent would think any country, however advantaged, can simply outrun the need for

goodwill from others. It would be far better for the United States to make the case that its own imperialism, however malfasant, is pudding next to a day in the life of those who live on the adversary's home turf. The mix of bellicosity and coyness Dubya & Co. are putting forward may blow up in their faces, possibly without blowing the living hell out of Saddam. The sad thing is, their lack of courage in this regard has everything to do with these deplorable moves to prior restraint.

DOUGLAS T. PRESLER

MO' MONEY, NO MONEY, NO MONEY!

Nevada City, Calif.

■ In your February 3 "In Fact..." a closing sentence reads: "Or should the [tax cut] money go to the wealthiest 1 percent to buy more stuff?" If only that were the case. Then this money might slightly benefit the economy. In reality, the wealthy simply reinvest it, where it tends to increase the value of stocks, again benefiting the wealthiest. OTTO HAUZEISEN

COMMENT

(Continued From Page 7)

corporate mess in the first place. The mutual-fund industry is riddled with conflicts of interest, and it is essentially an unregulated industry. In particular, they manage money for these companies that they also own as shareholders [on behalf of the mutual-fund investors], and so they vote with the management on the corporate-governance issues. If the company gives its business to Fidelity—managing 401(k) money or pension plans—then Fidelity votes with the management. That's the deal. So we are rolling back the rock and forcing them into the sunshine. That's the predicate for holding these fiduciary institutions accountable."

The AFL's campaign singled out Fidelity Investments, based in Boston, the country's largest mutual fund, among many thousands. Fidelity predictably rejected demands for voluntary disclosure. Among many issues, the one that really ignited public anger and built political support was the decision of Stanley Works, a venerable tool manufacturer in New Britain, Connecticut, to turn itself into a Bermuda corporation to avoid \$30 million in US taxes. The company needed shareholder approval and won the first vote, but the results were set aside after Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal alleged irregularities. Organized labor mobilized potent demonstrations against the company in New Britain and also against Fidelity (which itself is organized as a Bermuda corporation) at its Boston headquarters. Stanley canceled its trip to Bermuda. The second shareholder vote was abandoned.

Given the secrecy, the AFL activists could not prove definitively that Fidelity had voted with the Stanley management, but the relatively close tally indicated that Stanley could not have won without it. (The fact that Fidelity would not disclose its voting was also instructive.) When the AFL petitioned the SEC to issue its disclosure rule, the mutual fund industry tried to organize a political defense. The CEOs of Fidelity and Vanguard, the second-largest mutual fund, jointly bylined an op-ed piece in the *Wall Street Journal*, warning America about the dangers of full disclosure. "The threat is so severe that we, the leaders of the fund industry's two largest competitors, come together now, for the first time ever, to speak out publicly against it," wrote John Brennan (Vanguard) and Edward Johnson 3d (Fidelity).

But they were smartly trumped by a much more impressive voice from finance—John Bogle, the legendary founder of Vanguard and an industry pioneer, now retired. Bogle wrote a countering declaration of support for the SEC rule in the *New York Times* and explained that he founded Vanguard on this principle: "Mutual funds should be managed in the interest of their shareholders rather than in the interests of their managers. Now the industry I helped to create is squandering an opportunity to show the public that this ideal still matters." Bogle also essentially confirmed labor's complaint about the conflicted interests that disclosure will expose. "Some business difficulties may arise," he said. "Votes against management, for example, may make it harder for fund managers to get information from a corporation or to win the right to advise its pension plan. Controversial votes may draw unwanted publicity."

Yes, that is exactly what the AFL's Office of Investment and other shareholder campaigns have in mind. With disclosure of how a mutual fund actually went in the tank for the CEO, its investors

can be mobilized to protest or withdraw their money and park it somewhere else. The \$400 billion in union-sponsored pension funds will provide the leading edge in this leverage, followed by the much larger public employee funds, with \$2.6 trillion.

This fight may not be over. The Investment Company Institute, political mouthpiece for the mutual funds, vows to ask the new SEC chairman to revisit the issue, perhaps when it thinks no one is watching. But if shareholder activists can hold on to their victory, they will be fighting now on a broader and more promising battlefield. "If we're trying to get pension funds to act in the longer-term interests of their owners, the workers, then pulling the mutual funds into the sunlight matters too," Blackwell said. "This compels both the mutual fund industry and pension funds to be enormously powerful advocates for corporate accountability, instead of a force that supports corporate insiders to the disadvantage of the people whose money is invested." WILLIAM GREIDER

ACT NOW FOR PEACE

The antiwar movement is building on the momentum of the February 15 protests: On March 5 there will be a national day of student strikes (www.nyspc.net); on International Women's Day, March 8, a woman-led rally and march to encircle the White House (www.codepink4peace.org); and on March 15, an emergency convergence at the White House (www.internationalanswer.org). For information on US events: www.unitedforpeace.org and www.pax.protest.net; for European protests: www.stopwar.org.uk.

Make your voice heard by contacting your elected officials (www.congress.org). Join the Cities for Peace campaign (www.citiesforpeace.org)—over 100 cities and counties have already passed antiwar resolutions. Sign an online call or petition: MoveOn.org urges letting inspections work; the Campaign for Peace and Democracy calls for a foreign policy that opposes both Saddam Hussein and an invasion of Iraq (www.cpdweb.org); Pledge of Resistance calls for civil disobedience in the event of an unprovoked attack on Iraq (www.peacepledge.org/resist); Code Pink urges "Listen to the Women" (www.codepink4peace.org).

Other actions: The Win Without War coalition (www.winwithoutwar.org) is sponsoring cyberactivism and creative antiwar advertising. Rice for Peace (www.riceforpeace.org), advocating food rather than bombs, suggests mailing the President a half-cup of uncooked rice labeled RICE FOR PEACE—NO WAR ON IRAQ. Check out Poets Against the War (www.poetsagainsthewar.org), the No War Sign project (www.nowarsign.org) and free, easy to download antiwar songs from Billy Bragg (www.billybragg.com) and Chris and Kate (www.resistwar.com).

Need speakers? Contact the Education for Peace in Iraq Center (www.iraqspeakers.org; 202-543-6176). And see www.thenation.com's antiwar web page for *Nation* weblogs, articles, columns, editorials and web reports as well as activist and educational links (www.thenation.com).

BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Crawford Conundrum

THEODORE HAMM

MADE IN TEXAS: George W. Bush and the Southern Takeover of American Politics.By Michael Lind.
Basic. 224 pp. \$24.

Say what you will about Michael Lind, at least he's never predictable. That is, of course, unless your prediction is that he's once again trying to find a way to disagree with everyone else.

Lind first made a splash in 1996 with *The Next American Nation*, a strident assault on both multiculturalism and its elitist opponents alike. Three years later, in his descriptively titled *Vietnam: The Necessary War*, Lind chided those across the spectrum who try to "heal the wounds" of a war the author revises as a "justified" attempt to "preserve the military and diplomatic credibility of the United States in the Cold War."

Before you peg Lind as a reflexive hawk, however, do consider his latest target: the influence of the pro-Israel lobby over US foreign policy. How many apologists for Lyndon Johnson's war wage blistering assaults on Ariel Sharon's relentless expansionism? Very few, although that's probably because, except for Lind, there are almost no fans of LBJ's foreign policy left.

Lind's newest target is George W. Bush, a fellow Texan, as well as an equally steadfast opponent of multiculturalism, cultural elitism and dovish revisionism. But Lind clearly holds no brief for our forty-third President. Bush, in his view, is an heir to the worst traditions the Lone Star State has to offer, to a Texas that is a "toxic by-product of the hierarchical plantation society of the American South."

Lind for his part carries the torch for the Texas "modernists," figures like Sam Rayburn, LBJ and Ross Perot. In so doing, he manages once again to stake out his own ground. Like many foes of the President, he resents Bush because he's a swaggering

oilman from Texas. But, more uniquely, Lind also rails against him in the name of the "other Texas," the rural folk who were the proud beneficiaries of New Deal projects of rural electrification and other vast public works.

Even though Lind and his colleagues at the New America Foundation like to position themselves in what they call "the Radical Center," many of their ideas sound like variations on mid-twentieth-century liberalism, which actually places them to the left of either of the major parties. Unlike Bush or the Democrats, Lind advocates sizable state intervention in the market in order to redistribute wealth, population and even land. Yet, like Bush, a good portion of Lind's program is really only partly native to Texas soil.

Made in Texas opens with Lind's stark

Lind's book deserves a place next to Garry Wills's Reagan's America, anchoring the limited worldview of the President in its time.

contrast between two regions close in proximity but miles apart in temperament. The first is the Waco area, which encompasses Bush's Western White House in Crawford. Known mostly for its twin legacies of racism and Protestant fundamentalism, this benighted stretch of ranches and cotton farms has historically been a seedbed for the KKK and later the Branch Davidians. Lind sees such traditions as matching those of the West Texas culture where George W. grew up, and it's in his ranch outside Waco where the President now feels most at home.

Just an hour away is the Texas Hill Country, whose regional identity derives from the freethinking, pro-Unionist German settlers of the mid-nineteenth century. "The region in which [Lyndon] Johnson grew up was a land of small hills, small rivers—and small producers," Lind writes. The author tends to wax rhapsodic about the region. For Lind, the Hill Country is an oasis of "racial and ethnic pluralism," a world apart from the "black/white caste system" of East

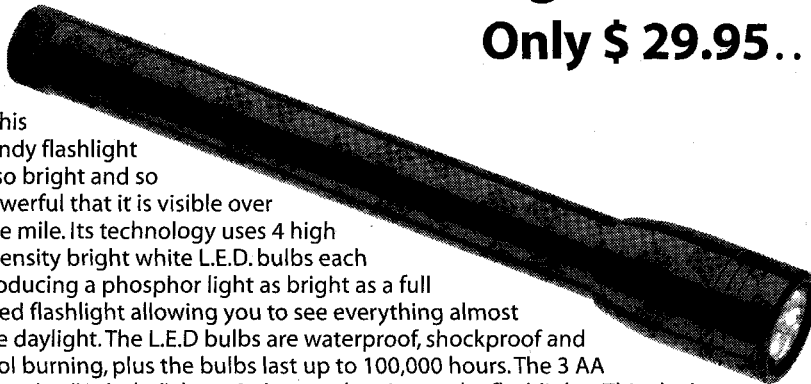
Theodore Hamm, author of *Rebel and a Cause* (California), is editor of the Brooklyn Rail, recent winner of an Utne Independent Press Award.

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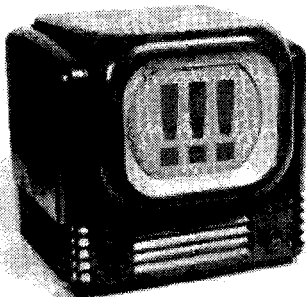
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Texas and the greater Deep South to which it belonged.

Where to place Texas on the political map has never been a simple question. At times it has seemed to be an extension of the Deep South, but in some places, particularly from San Antonio westward, it seems more representative of the Southwest. But like California, the only state larger in population, Texas has also been a place with a political identity all its own. Together these two states have provided five of the past seven elected Presidents, merely fueling the outsized self-importance intrinsic to each state's boosterism.

Whether the politics of either place are nationally representative is another story. From the early 1960s through the mid-1990s, California was often viewed as the national political bellwether. The breeding ground of the New Left at Berkeley, the New Right of Reagan and the New Democrats led by Jerry Brown, California by the late 1990s would see the defeat of its extreme right, but only by an extremely conservative Democrat. For now, at least, the state's political landscape is too ill defined for California to be seen as the nation's trendsetter.

More multiracial than other states in the Deep South, Texas historically experienced a more complex version of the region's hallmark conflict between pluralism and white supremacy. Lind pays only limited attention to the place of Tejanos in the state's racial order, however. Instead, he finds that, differences aside, the history of Texas matches that found elsewhere in what he terms the "Confederate Century" (1876-1970s): an "Anglo-Celtic" elite "created a de facto Confederacy, with the economy of a non-industrial resource colony, the social order of a racial caste society, and the politics of a one-party dictatorship." Harsh words from a native son, indeed.

Lind is far prouder of the struggle waged by LBJ, Sam Rayburn and other so-called Texas Loyalists during the 1930s. The Loyalists were the pro-Roosevelt faction of the state's Democratic Party, who were outnumbered by the party's "Regulars," ultrareactionaries like Martin Dies and Governor Allan Shivers. The conservative Democrats helped insure that Texas got what they viewed as the best of both worlds: New Deal money for public works projects, but without New Deal social programs or improvements in workers' rights.

As was the case elsewhere in the New South, when Texas began to develop industrially in the postwar era, it did so as a low-wage, unregulated alternative to the

North. But here again, the outlook of the state's elite thwarted full industrial development of the region. Lind finds that the "pre-bourgeois, aristocratic mentality of the Texan/Southern oligarchy" continues to be resistant to thrift, efficiency and invention. In his view, the high-tech center of Austin, home to Dell Computers, has developed in isolation from the interests of the state's agribusiness and oil elite.

George W. Bush is clearly the natural political byproduct of the limited economic and social vision of the Texas elite. But one does have to wonder whether the President's agenda is truly "made in Texas." In terms of his foreign policy of wars for global domination, this holds appeal not only to Big Oil but also to military contractors and multinational corporations headquartered across the country. Meanwhile, Bush's domestic agenda of tax cuts for the wealthy may spark outcries but not calls for the restoration of genuinely progressive taxation. The Democrats, for the most part, have neither opposed the Administration's foreign policy nor articulated an alternative economic vision.

Lind's notion of a "Southern Takeover of American Politics" also doesn't feel so new, as the South took over national politics long ago. After Johnson's landslide victory in 1964, Nixon won four years later by deploying his "Southern Strategy"; Reagan, the only non-Southerner elected since then, followed suit, and was the preferred candidate of the religious right. Bush, in other words, is simply the latest outgrowth of what then-Republican strategist Kevin Phillips described in 1969 as the "Sun Belt Phenomenon": "a new, conservative political era [emerging] in the South, Southwest and Heartland."

In terms of both agenda and political base, there is a direct line from Barry Goldwater through Reagan to Bush. For such figures there is no contradiction between state-sponsored military spending and their paeans to the freedom of the market. Reducing or eliminating social programs while cutting taxes for the rich does not trouble this entourage, for whom voodoo economics is a deeply held religious conviction. The more frightening aspect of this agenda is the degree to which the Democrats have embraced it over the past decade.

Yet while Lind's Texas-centric analysis distorts the degree to which Bush is a radical departure from the New Right's past, his discussion of that movement's future does seem quite prescient. "The rural, the religious, and the white—this was the social base of George W. Bush's Southern-based Republican Party," he writes. "Far

smaller than the Reagan coalition, this Southern party and its Western wing would have won only the House of Representatives in the 2000 election if not for rural overrepresentation." In the midterm elections, the Republicans appealed to only a slim majority of the 39 percent of voters who turned out, making Lind's analysis of the party's shrinking base seem all the more hopeful.

The base may be there for the Democrats or for another party, but it's less clear what sort of alternative agenda it will take to inspire voters to go to the polls. For his part, Lind offers up some thoughtful ideas inspired by the work of the rural modernizers during the New Deal. In the areas where New Dealers once sought to bring electrification, Lind now envisions the massive development of "high-tech infrastructure." Viewing population decentralization—with the expansion of homeownership—as a positive goal, Lind wants the America between the coasts to be the center of wireless communications and a hydrogen-based national energy network.

Like the party in power, Lind is unafraid to offer up a bold vision, but his is a far more egalitarian one. Placing his "decentralist utopia" in the tradition of FDR and LBJ's state-led development, and of Lewis Mumford's and Frank Lloyd Wright's visions, Lind foresees "a post-agricultural Plains in which private wilderness preserves alternate with small towns and federal research bases, which, connected by hundreds of small airports, are home to telecommuting professionals or well-paid service workers." Our current President stands little chance of engaging the details of such a blueprint, and much less of explaining them to "the boys in Lubbock."

Lind's proposal is worthy of both consideration and criticism. Politically, at least, concentrations of population have historically provided the power bases for minority and working-class communities in urban areas. Homesteadlike migrations would surely reduce that strength, and Lind's vision of the ease with which "immigrants and inner-city poor [would] migrate to the interior and join the middle class of the American heartland" seems rather fanciful. Though based more on his concern for working-class wages than xenophobia, Lind's calls for restrictions on immigration also will likely anger liberals and pro-business conservatives alike.

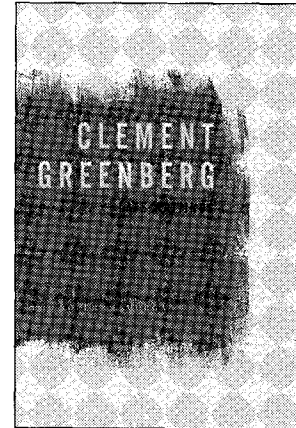
The bigger question for Lind, as well as for his colleagues at the New America Foundation, involves how they expect their innovative policy proposals to become part of the national political debate. Boosting

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rural infrastructure, creating national savings accounts and building a national industrial policy are all ideas that should become part of the discussion. But they are unlikely to do so unless they have a party and a constituency to promote them.

Favorable as he is to FDR and LBJ, Lind tends to give credit only to the politicians and the policy-makers, not to the political coalitions that sustained them. The Democrats still have LBJ's base behind them, but the party's strategists shy away from offering anything in the way of bold visions. By incorporating a few of the ideas that Lind and company are proposing, the party of Roosevelt may again become the party of Roosevelt.

Made in Texas works on many different levels. As contemporary history, it de-

serves a place on the shelf next to Garry Wills's *Reagan's America*, anchoring as it does the limited worldview of the President in its proper time and place. As a biography specifically of Bush, Lind's book usefully reminds us that even though Mark Crispin Miller's deceptive simpleton (of *The Bush Dyslexicon*) may indeed be Bob Woodward's commanding chief (of *Bush at War*), the worldview of the Texas elite in truth is pretty damn limited and downright dangerous. Finally, as a policy manifesto, Lind's work makes an excellent case for the benefits of restoring the New Deal to national politics. Even though the New Deal, like the New Right, was not really made there, Texas may yet again yield a more positive legacy than Enron and the death house. ■

Slumming Toward Academia

ARMOND WHITE

THE NEW H.N.I.C.: The Death of Civil Rights and the Reign of Hip Hop.

By Todd Boyd. New York University. 169 pp. \$22.95.

Only the joy of capitalist expectation could move a pre-Reagan-born American to utter the line "civil rights is dead," let alone write a book devoted to that proposition. UCLA professor Todd Boyd's new book *The New H.N.I.C.: The Death of Civil Rights and the Reign of Hip Hop* is a depressing read not

because his thesis is correct but because the very existence of a tome this obnoxious demonstrates the degraded expectations afoot in our universities and publishing houses, where social justice cowers before the marketplace phenomenon represented by hip-hop culture.

Boyd's 169-page book (including a glossary of hip-hop terms) makes little effort to prove how an underground social movement has remade society. Through random descriptions of questionable public comments and performances by a few successful black celebrities (comedian Chris Rock, entrepreneur Russell Simmons, rapper Nas, TV host Arsenio Hall), it merely uses the umbrella term hip-hop and its well-known commercial impact to translate how some African-Americans have unapologetically pursued money and personal wealth into the illusion of genuine political progress. Avoiding theorists and philosophers, Boyd

himself takes these celebrity career arcs as a sign that black America's social objectives have changed. "Change and an understanding of one's history do not have to be mutually exclusive," Boyd summarizes. He wants to shake off any claim that African-American political history has on its descendants—dismiss guilt by celebrating gelt. So Boyd distorts the rapacity of hip-hop culture into a poorly articulated social revolution. To an average observer, the emphasis on individual wealth rather than community benefits might look like decline. Thirty-eight-year-old Boyd offers the insider's privileged insight that a new black American history is now being written in the form of hit records, TV shows, gold chains and forgetfulness.

Academia has been trying to catch up with hip-hop ever since Henry Louis Gates testified on behalf of 2 Live Crew in 1990. It's always been behind—or wrong. Boyd's new book is the latest ivory tower miscalculation. *The New H.N.I.C.* reads like a demo record rather than an academic treatise. (Its lightweight, repetitive prose is meant to be heard, maybe, but it's torturous to read.) Replacing mortarboard and tassel

with a Kangol and cigar, Boyd has styled for himself a new media persona that combines caricatures of the b-boy, pimp and university don. He's posing for people who don't follow hip-hop music yet want either an easy updated handle on the phenomenon or, like Boyd himself, eagerly seek to glom onto its notoriety.

A bizarre effort at crossover, Boyd's book explains hip-hop in portentous ways fans will find useless and through slangy terms nonfans will find suspicious. "I see myself as an agent provocateur," he writes. Not content to simply define hip-hop, Boyd wants *The New H.N.I.C.* to be hip-hop. The first problem begins with the unmusical, infelicitous title. Its acronym stands for Head Niggas In Charge; that's not exactly PhD, but, flipping it like a business card, Boyd mocks political correctness and academic decorum. Despite the neologism of "nigga" (instead of "nigger"), the sense of that old phrase cannot be refashioned without reconfiguring its implicit acknowledgment of plantation hierarchy. But Boyd doesn't want to cast doubt on the success of contemporary black stars and professors who might seem to be working for a phantom massa in some ideological big house. He pretends that hip-hop's record industry and TV successes have improved the political economy of all black folk. Essentially, he boasts of his own, obscure, tenured existence as confirmation that the post-affirmative action world has provided a compensatory way of looking at American potential. But a professor is still an employee and can only long for the autonomy of hip-hop stardom.

Boyd knows he doesn't "rock the boulevard," as Chuck D bragged, yet writing a book about hip-hop is his attempt at extending his privileged token status into the pop world. "Black culture has the power to influence and that this influence is transcendent...is a good example of agency," he intones. Academics adore "agency" and black academics (who at best reach only a small portion of black youth) envy the ability of hip-hop artists to seem "in charge." It's sexier than being a black political leader. But a book-length essay—even one as slim as this—doesn't make politics the way a pop record can. (Think of Marvin Gaye's "What's Goin' On," Public Enemy's "Fight the Power," Salt-N-Pepa's "Let's Talk About Sex.") Boyd merely makes confusion.

Positing the death of civil rights is not only chilling, it's a lame ploy cynically aimed at bilking liberal sentiment—a typical effort of the black academic attempting to infiltrate the literati. "Civil rights has passed; get over it!" Boyd says. He condemns the 1950s–60s movement, charg-

Armond White is film critic for the New York Press and author of *The Resistance: Ten Years of Pop Culture That Shook the World (Overlook)* and *Rebel for the Hell of It: The Art-Life of Tupac Shakur (Thunder's Mouth)*.

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ing that "Blackness was cloaked in suffering." He claims that "the civil rights movement was dour, it was serious, and it was ultimately heavy in the way that it bore on the soul." The same can be said of hip-hop's clichéd imagery, cloaked in anger, clinging to urban suffering for justification. This unfathomable dismissal of past struggle favors hip-hop's teenage impetuosity. No other eth.n.i.c. group would indulge such deracination unless it had been traditionally encouraged to disrespect its history and is currently intimidated by pop culture's profitable frivolity. In pop, success is more likely if one ignores the precepts of the past and embraces the audacity of youth, or whatever the media sell as "new," including Boyd's fatuous new-and-improved ideology. In place of solidarity, "We need to try to align ourselves with Latinos, Asian Americans, progressive White people and anybody else who is on some new shit," Boyd proposes, as if the civil rights past did not nobly succeed on the basis of expansive ethnic group alliances. We've seen this shallow hip thought before—and it's always been untrustworthy. *Village Voice* writer Nelson George used it for his book *The Death of Rhythm and Blues* in 1988, at just the point when rap music represented r&b's resurgence (disguising George's negativity as prescient rather than the pandering it actually was). This decadent exploitation of black culture through suggestions of its demise is ruthless—and silly. It's essentially a sign of the author's craven ambition. There's no social or cultural insight in Boyd's or George's book, but by pretending scholarly or historical investigation, these writers intend to propel themselves into hip-hop stardom even if it means belittling the black cultural struggle that from sit-ins to SNCC to the Panthers was a model for hip-hop's aggressive mix of pop and politics.

There's got to be a more honest, thoughtful way of talking about why pop music matters. The marvel of hip-hop is when it makes good sense in original, witty ways that we don't need—or get—from academia. Boyd pits himself against younger and far more creative, inspired men. Nothing in *The New H.N.I.C.* is as observant or sincere as the rapper Nelly's 2002 album *Nellyville*, which features a title track that is a hip-hop adept's ideal manifesto. On "Nellyville," Nelly's dream society is built on the civil rights era's aspirations. More provocative than Boyd, Nelly imagines a modern utopia that is a direct reflection of the desires aroused by today's social deprivation yet keeps in line with an earlier sense of social and spiritual need:

Nelly calls for peace, prosperity, justice. By jesting "40 acres and mule? 40 acres and a pool!" Nelly insists that the broken promises of America's political past are understood intuitively by today's generation, who wittily replace false promise with willful, exaggerated determination.

Opposing civil rights to hip-hop as Boyd does confuses cultural postures with politics; he trips up the social consciousness Nelly represents. Unlike community party-thrasher Nelly, the only politics Boyd approves is capitalism—a personal politics of greed. He praises "those who see the pursuit of capital as the only true means to an authentic existence in America." But instead of examining the home-grown authenticity of Nelly's lyrics (and the rapper's ancillary commercial enterprises), Boyd esteems a select group of modern icons—Rock, Simmons, Nas, Hall, Sean "P. Diddy" Combs (and honorary black celeb Bill Clinton)—as representatives of a new political era. These chapters loosely, shakily ratify the nonpolitical positions of those performers who are perhaps better known to the mainstream than Nelly but who certainly evince less political instinct.

In his estimation of celebrity, Boyd attempts to palm off venality that is actually better stated in the rapper 50 Cent's mainstream debut album, which carries the title *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*—it's a balder expression of the sentiment to which Boyd adds lame political obfuscation. In his first single release, "In Da Club," 50 Cent says, "If the talk ain't about money, then I ain't concerned." This helpfully distills the essence of Boyd's argument and does so with more clarity, if not more honesty. Boyd professes no shame in selling out. "Exposure helps to sell records, and this in turn allows the artists more of an opportunity to sell their respective messages." Through such sophistry as this academia has been paving the path for mainstream culture's exploitation of the underclass. In a riff-lecture on the envious practice of "playa hating," Boyd says, "If hip hop is about nothing else, it is about the redefinition of language.... With this active sense of love and hate in mind, one recognizes the way that playa hatin' has emerged as a primary concern in hip hop circles and has even moved beyond to suggest a larger systemic notion of this playa hatin' syndrome at work in mainstream society." That may sound scholarly, but Boyd notoriously ignores the obvious explanation for this reverse language syndrome; he neglects to admit how hip-hop's underclass desperation mirrors the worst aspects of dominant capitalist competition even when ex-

pressing it in unique nomenclature.

Possibly the worst turn in Boyd's random discussion insults the historic role of the black church in calculated praise of today's nonreligious, commercially focused hip-hop community. He argues, "The Black church is ultimately not a threat to any of the larger sources of power in our society," deliberately omitting the church's well-recorded social utility during the emancipation and civil rights eras. Boyd ignorantly asserts, "If ever there was a situation in which Black people were being urged to stay in their place, it is the Black church." But that's more true of hip-hop whenever gangsta rap places emphasis on ghetto fabulousness and capitalist aggression. Boyd's bizarre reasoning that the "Black church has far too much influence on the affairs of Black people" avoids the simple truth that fewer black people go to church today—except those he dismisses as following old, middle-class models of power and progress. Even the Ice Cube quotes he uses to back up this idea are suspiciously a decade old. Boyd ignores the subtle, contemporary distinctions between church and the "chuch" heard on Snoop Dogg's new album. Nelly, Scarface, Snoop, Missy Elliott and Jay-Z have all made records that attest to the church as a source of faith, identity and social idealism. These artists deserve the serious political attention that a slumming academic automatically attracts. Our political media have yet to trust the messages and significant movements of young black artists—a class bias that exposes us to the lies of academic charlatans.

Black academics who fetishize underclass amorality do so as a mutation of the hip-hop era. The higher media profile that comes from hip-hop's commercial popularity gives these public intellectuals the advantage of seeming connected to that cultural advance. In truth, they exist in a parallel universe to young, unruly rappers who Boyd says are "creating some of our most astute moments of cultural representation." Thus begins Boyd's strange twist on youth-pandering identity politics. He credits the Atlanta rap group Outkast for representing "a different generation of Black people, and that happens to be the generation most accurately defined by hip hop culture." It's actually black youth who define hip-hop culture, not the other way around, and certainly not Boyd's own generation—already too old to make the music that matters. Springing from universities instead of record companies and dance clubs, hip-hop-era academics are products of the campuswide movement toward multicultural inclusion; they main-

tain ties to cultural fashion and political trends because they're desperately mindful of the classic admonition "publish or perish" and see it as "perform or perish." They can explain black America to white America without seeming threatening—a stance already perfected by Gates and Cornel West. Boyd merely imitates the younger generation's flourish. Like Michael Eric Dyson, Boyd uses rap lingo and behavior as if he were still connected to the street; both perform as if they were, in fact, teenagers. Sadly, the intellection these professors exhibit is less probing than the average teenager's; displaying none of rap's

intellectual ingenuity or political challenge, they only emulate rappers' effrontery. They praise hip-hop's juvenilia with logic that suggests senility.

Refuting civil rights-era ideals, Boyd valorizes "a conscious refusal to integrate with mainstream America [that] now characterizes those Black people who willingly exist in their own world." He overlooks the important irony that this hip-hop generation of rascally malcontents yet demonstrates no true rebellion; they unquestioningly participate in the American ideas of wealth and consumerism. Boyd conveniently credits hip-hop's commercialism as an improve-

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ment over civil rights concerns. "Having the means to buy and sell oneself and one's culture suggests a different level of power and agency at play." This academic lingo, used to justify lack of social virtues, is a new con.

Acclaiming street credibility and authenticity, Dr. B, as Boyd calls himself, represents a displaced black professionalism—a disgrace of the old civil rights credo "Each One, Teach One." "Hip hop has rejected and now replaced the pious, sanctimonious nature of civil rights," Boyd declares—an obscene misunderstanding of political history and a perversion of social ideals from which hip-hop's most publicized genre (gangsta rap) has developed its own piety and fashion, based on the treachery and greed of street anarchy. A

prof who proclaims this decline is also behind the intellectual curve of the sales charts, missing hip-hop's recent swing back toward the good times and cultural reflection of its earliest days. Boyd's opportunistic dismissal of civil rights can only interest readers who are so distanced from black America they need the wildest claims to sustain their fear and ignorance. Instead of carefully examining how the politics of survival and collaboration has changed since the civil rights 1960s, Boyd champions the commercial exploitation of the black underclass through hip-hop. And he betrays hip-hop through academic pomposity. As with everything else in *The New H.N.I.C.*, a reasonable reader need only disagree—then listen to Nelly. ■

food chain (just ask the victims of Mass Extinction No. 5—the dinosaurs).

Humans, McKee notes, have a long and troubling history of muscling out other species through a myriad of practices, including agriculture, irrigation, habitat destruction, pollution, the introduction of invasive species and our latest contribution—the dramatic and irresponsible overproduction of greenhouse gases. While tropical rainforests are cleared in order to make room for farms, McKee ruefully observes, the constant felling has generated a mere 13 percent of the world's cropland, yet it has spelled disaster for disproportionately high numbers of flora and fauna. For example, of the known plant species worldwide, at least one in eight is threatened or hovers near the brink of extinction. To date, human activity has put 40–50 percent of the Earth's available land out of commission to a vast number of species, which are critical to eco-stability. Furthermore, these lands have now been rendered worthless even to humans because of overfarming and excessive development.

Some may ask, so what if we lose a minor species here or there in the march of progress? To many, the loss of Northern California's endangered tiger salamander (threatened by sprawl) would represent a far less significant loss than the annihilation of the mighty Bengal tiger (the public tends to respond more strongly to the large, majestic threatened animals). But McKee evinces that an absence, either large or small, in nature's master blueprint has a ripple effect. "What is lost with one type of animal are the others that depend on it. What is lost is an ecosystem."

With an elegant and earnest writing style more common among nature writers than academics, McKee tallies the value of a balanced ecosystem, explaining, "These complex systems took millions of years to evolve, and the resulting web of life is not easily unwoven. The extinction of one species may have dire consequences for its coevolutionary partners. Thus, in today's highly evolved world, it takes biodiversity to sustain biodiversity." It's easy to spot other areas of life where varied components help complex entities survive and thrive, as diversity is considered good for college campuses, 401(k) portfolios and a healthy diet. Similarly, *Sparing Nature* confirms that biodiversity is integral to a healthy and robust planet, serving critical functions in everything from climate management to erosion control.

Despite its sobering analysis, *Sparing Nature* is perhaps a bit too damning in one

Biodiversity and You

TATIANA SIEGEL

SPARING NATURE: The Conflict Between Human Population Growth and Earth's Biodiversity.

By Jeffrey K. McKee. Rutgers. 210 pp. \$28.

TILTING AT MILLS: Green Dreams, Dirty Dealings, and the Corporate Squeeze.

By Lis Harris. Houghton Mifflin. 241 pp. \$25.

As the Earth's population surges toward the 7 billion mark, the following twist on an old maxim perhaps best applies: A single birth is a joyous occasion. A billion births is a tragedy.

When the planet's human head count topped the 6 billion threshold in 1999, few pundits seemed to grasp the catastrophic ecological implications. Rush Limbaugh weighed in with frequent assurances that the entire global population could fit comfortably in the state of Texas. But as the planet endures an alarming net gain of more than 73 million a year, or some 200,000 people a day, it would be naïve to think that this explosion can occur without grave environmental repercussions.

Until now, there has been a dearth of literature linking human population growth and biodiversity loss. However, Jeffrey K. McKee's stunning, albeit flawed, new book *Sparing Nature* pinpoints the precise moment (in geological terms) when our early ancestors' success resulted in the death of neighboring species—roughly 1.8 million years ago, with the arrival of *Homo erectus*.

Around that time, African mammals began to disappear at an unparalleled pace. But the biodiversity crisis really accelerated, McKee establishes, at the onset of the agriculture age, some 10,000 years ago, when humans enjoyed unprecedented growth. The book then takes the cause-effect model one step further and assesses what the mass decline of species diversification means for the continuity of the human race.

McKee, an anthropology professor at Ohio State University and co-author of *The Riddled Chain: Chance, Coincidence, and Chaos in Human Evolution*, offers several theses in *Sparing Nature*. He argues that preserving biodiversity is essential to the health of the planet, and consequently the long-term survival of the human species. On this point, he offers incontrovertible evidence. Mining the fossil record, McKee demonstrates that it is no coincidence that our impressive proliferation also corresponds with what many scientists believe is the planet's sixth major period of mass extinction. And as history reveals, mass extinctions don't bode well for the top of the

Tatiana Siegel is a writer at the Environmental Policy Center in San Francisco whose criticism has also appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle and the Providence Journal. She is currently writing a book of profiles from the American environmental movement.

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of its main points: "The impact of our large population would be great *even if* we were to behave differently." McKee follows up by stating that our mere presence—regardless of whether we recycle, drive a hybrid, support organic farming or eschew McDonald's—will always limit or reduce biodiversity. In short, our behavioral choices have less impact than our sheer numbers. But this contention seems to fly in the face of logic. After all, not all humans leave a similar footprint on the ecological landscape. The United States, for example, is the most prolific global polluter, and thus habitat destroyer, in many categories, particularly the generation of greenhouse-gas emissions. Yet our population is dwarfed by both China's and India's. Contrary to McKee's line of reasoning, a two-child family living in a 12,000-square-foot Westchester County home, which is heated, air-conditioned, landscaped and redecorated every two years with furniture made from Indonesian rain-forest wood is having a greater impact on nature's ability to function unimpeded than a family of eight living under one roof in a Mexican village.

In fact, a study published in a January issue of the journal *Nature* found that an increase in the number of homes sheltering fewer people is more damaging to the environment than simple population growth. This trend—in which a nuclear family of four lives in a separate home rather than with the traditional extended family—is uniquely congruous with Western prosperity. The study notes that the rise in the number of dwellings with fewer occupants leads to a greater exploitation of natural resources such as land, energy, wood and water, and that this amplified use of scarce reserves is endangering species diversification.

McKee does make a convincing argument about the greater number of mouths to feed. At first glance, his contention holds up, as food is perhaps mankind's common denominator. Everyone needs sustenance, and man's taming of the land in the quest for food has dealt the greatest blow to biodiversity. But not all mouths are equally demanding. As Lester Brown, one of the world's most influential environmental thinkers, noted in his book *Who Will Feed China?*, if the Chi-

nese diet mirrored the Japanese diet, all the world's fish stocks would be depleted. Once again, affluence seems to be a more overriding variable than raw numbers.

As one of the regions of the country experiencing unprecedented population pressures, California offers a unique glimpse into how human behavior shapes the landscape in a more significant way than the sum of all people. Over the next twenty years, the Golden State will add 11.3 million new residents, and the ensuing land development will undoubtedly encroach on fragile habitat. Because the growth is almost entirely due to immigration, the newcomers and their offspring tend to be blamed for the state's ecological woes. But even if California closed its borders to all future immigration, it wouldn't solve any of the most vexing environmental problems, particularly the shrinking water supply. Consider that up to three-quarters of the state's urban water use goes to landscaping—an activity more frequently associated with the wealthy and middle class than the newly arrived.

Most land-use experts concur that population growth isn't the primary cause of environmental degradation. Rather, historic land-use patterns, which have resulted in a car-dependent culture, continue to wreak havoc on the natural world. And while it undercuts their own best interests, Californians hate density (a term often erroneously confused with crowding). Paris is one of the most densely populated cities in the world, yet it is heralded as one of the most livable. Unfortunately, most Californians think "livable" equals a single-family home with a yard, even if it entails a three-hour daily commute and horrible air quality. That's why the state has become synonymous with sprawl. And according to the National Wildlife Federation, sprawl is the leading cause of species imperilment in California, outranking all other factors. While countless plants, insects, reptiles, birds and animals indigenous to California survived the Ice Age, they may be defenseless against the Age of the Subdivision.

A 2001 Sierra Club report that examined nationwide land-use patterns reached similar conclusions. The report found that population growth accounts for only 31 percent of America's land consumption. Much of the rest can be blamed on ill-conceived land-use planning and government subsidies that encourage sprawl. According to Cornell University professor Rolf Pendall, "It is clear that population increases are not the only contributor to sprawl. Increasing population growth is most problematic when it happens in regions with poor land-use decision-making."

The problem with McKee's numbers-trump-behavior argument is that it unintentionally absolves societies—like the United States—that largely keep their population growth in check. However, when the United States withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol negotiations in 2001, it committed to a path of habitat destruction that outweighs any progress it can make in reducing its population.

Nevertheless, population growth does pose a grave risk to our global environment. As we add enough new people to the planet every thirty-eight days to populate a new New York City, McKee's call to stem and perhaps even reduce our numbers is undoubtedly warranted. The Bush Administration's withdrawal last July of the \$34 million it had promised to support the UN Population Fund wasted an opportunity to spread the message of responsible family planning. While the move understandably drew criticism from women's rights advocates, few discussed the decision's environmental fallout. As McKee dejectedly notes, "It comes down to this question: do we want fewer children who have more to appreciate, or more children who have less to appreciate?" And don't count on a mighty plague to restore the Earth's equilibrium. McKee maintains that "the rise of disease probably will not be enough to seriously stem our persistent population growth—it will just be enough to make us miserable."

Unfortunately, McKee, much like mankind, waits until the final chapter to discuss possible solutions. And even then, his suggestions are vague. *Sparing Nature* calls for population-growth abatement and improved family planning. But the only proposal he offers is to foster a global conscientiousness through education about the perils of overpopulation. It's a noble-sounding gesture, but is it realistic? McKee briefly cites one successful model: The Iranian government offered free vasectomies for married men, distributed contraceptives and slashed its population growth in half. It's a program that should definitely be studied and perhaps replicated.

While McKee believes that eco-friendly lifestyle choices are well-meaning, he thinks it would be more beneficial, and perhaps easier, simply to cease population growth worldwide. But in the absence of viable population-reduction prescriptions, conservation efforts remain our greatest chance for reversing global cataclysm.

While *Sparing Nature* considers the "think globally" facet of environmentalism, Lis Harris's *Tilting at Mills* scrutinizes the

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RESOLVED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That

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~~Article IV. The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Governor thereof, in Case of Rebellion, insurrection, or domestic Violence, shall suppress the same.~~
~~Article V. When the Congress shall have passed a Bill for the Amendment of this Constitution, three fourths of both Houses, by a Majority of each, and three fourths of the States shall have ratified the same, it shall be valid, as part of the Constitution of the United States.~~
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"act locally" component. Expanded from a *New Yorker* article, this dourly quixotic tale recounts one man's failed endeavor to enact a micro solution to a macro problem.

Driven by the knowledge that less than 20 percent of the world's virgin forests remained intact and that much of that was under siege, Natural Resources Defense Council scientist Allen Hershkowitz wanted to advance international habitat conservation through a visionary South Bronx project. Hershkowitz devised a way to create an eco-friendly paper-recycling mill on a seventeen-acre parcel of the Harlem River rail yard that would limit the demand for virgin paper products, preserve some of the world's great ecosystems (5.1 million trees each year, to be exact) and reduce the amount of waste paper heading for landfills and incinerators, while cleaning up an urban brownfield and providing up to 600 full-time jobs for an impoverished community.

The Bronx Community Paper Company was owned by a once successful and admired community organization, the Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association. But in reality, BCPC was Hershkowitz's baby, and his employer, the powerful NRDC, served as godparent. And if ever there was a good place to bring to life such a venture, it was New York City—dubbed the Saudi Arabia of wastepaper for its bountiful postconsumer supply. The five boroughs consume 1.5 million tons of newsprint a year. By comparison, all of Canada consumes 1.2 million tons annually. The city also discards about 3.6 million tons of paper every year, with at least 80 percent of it going straight to the landfill or incinerator.

What ensued was a sordid tale of pride and corruption. The book details how the BCPC project was unable to transcend a number of obstacles, including political turf wars; Banana Kelly's mismanagement of millions of dollars in funds; misguided opposition from the community; and perhaps even the well-meaning Hershkowitz, who seemed unwilling to compromise on any part of his overarching goals.

By offering the dream-crushing account of the otherwise typical tale of an expensive municipal deal gone sour, Harris illustrates the complexity of driving an environmentally progressive project through the labyrinthine halls of local governments and community basements. While Hershkowitz jumped at the chance to show how industry had the potential to promote humanistic goals, few, including his fellow enviros, shared his unyielding enthusiasm. Hershkowitz saw the mill as a chance to bring together "cultures (business, community,

environmental) that rarely spoke each other's language, to actually change the way people think about industrial development."

Initially, the proposed project garnered a great deal of support from powerful allies, like Governor George Pataki and eventually the Clinton Administration. But Harris reports that the South Bronx Clean Air Coalition became a vocal and pivotal critic after it tried unsuccessfully to extort money from the BCPC in exchange for its support. The coalition subsequently waged a public relations war fraught with misinformation, including charges that the mill would poison babies.

The smear campaign found a receptive audience with local environmental justice advocates, including one NRDC envoy, who had grown wary of what was seen as a movement oblivious to the toxic dumps that were continually sited in poor communities. Harris writes, "There was a certain suspicion in the environmental justice world that the Timberland and Patagonia crowd, the trail hikers and tree huggers, simply didn't have that much interest in the environmental problems of poor people, especially poor urban people." Had it succeeded, however, the Bronx mill would have reduced the need for polluting landfills and incinerators, which are predominantly built in black and Latino neighborhoods.

Amazingly enough, according to Harris's history of the eight-year debacle, the NRDC dealt the proposed mill a devastating setback by unceremoniously dumping the venture after being hit with a potentially debilitating lawsuit by one of the subcontractors. But *Tilting at Mills* suggests that the nonprofit had already grown disenchanted by this point with how enmeshed Hershkowitz had become with the project. Harris writes that for the NRDC, "there was strong resistance to crossing over the line between business and advocacy—to going beyond the role of advisers—a step that Hershkowitz so passionately believed had to be taken, lest the movement become irrelevant."

Ultimately, the paper industry dealt the mill its fatal blow. Though several major paper companies feigned interest throughout the process, Harris reports that they didn't want the mill to come to fruition, because no one wanted to facilitate supply entering the marketplace and driving down newsprint prices.

Tilting at Mills illuminates the unavoidable tragedy that the mill's collapse spells for the people who live downwind from a future incinerator or the species lost when a forest is clearcut. Unfortunately, Harris reveals, that's just business as usual. ■

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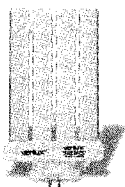
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PUZZLE NO. 2884

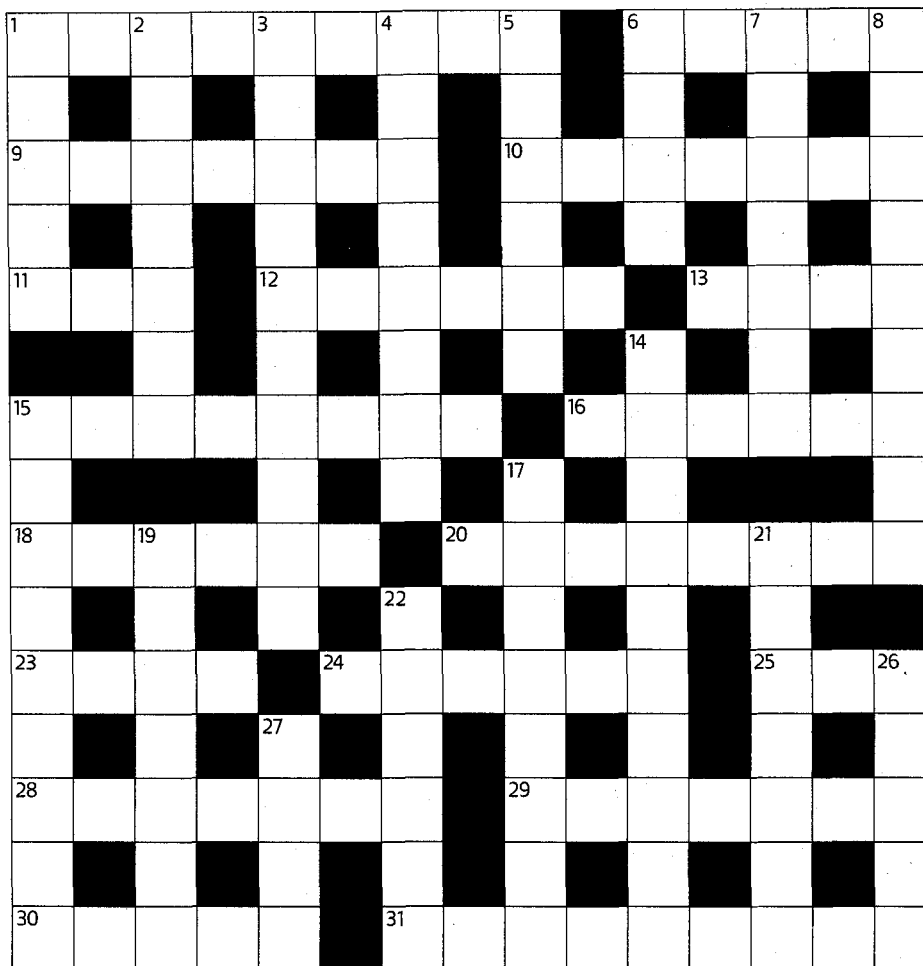
FRANK W. LEWIS

ACROSS

- 1 A football player gets a different arrangement when just out of sight of the audience. (9)
- 6 Gets rid of the old outhouses? (5)
- 9 A booster, according to Kipling, though a common fellow who gets to lie in a bad way. (7)
- 10 In a wild ride, apt to see moths, etc., here. (7)
- 11, 12 and 15 down Only those over 50 will remember the air having a fruity flavor—or rather the absence thereof. (3,2,4,2,7)
- 13 and 25 6 across in singular fashion might be a parody. (7)
- 15 What might be able to hatch things around the region in such as the Holy Land? (4,4)
- 16 and 23 How to come in first barely describes how Cyrano was expected to prevail. (3,2,1,4)
- 18 Somewhat loose brakes, although they are what the hopeful might be looking for, if lucky. (6)
- 20 Somewhat purple, but in the air it might be blue or green. (8)
- 23 See 16
- 24 Part of the wheel—a forty-five-inch measure surrounded by the enemy. (6)
- 25 See 13
- 28 and 26 down Traditionally, not viewed by a single person! (7,5)
- 29 At one time may have come off the top of the head, with the Spanish—a knife being involved in the operation. (7)
- 30 Constructed of slate, it sounds more like a modified form of iron—but in the spiritual they did away with it. (5)
- 31 Perhaps rides up, i.e., and uses the stage as a vehicle. (9)

DOWN

- 1 Does the baby get around in it a bit infested? (5)
- 2 Proving the tail-end of Rin Tin Tin looks like the Charles's pooch, which is only fair game. (7)
- 3 Hip's out of joint? Some coasters were associated with such breakage, which paid off. (10)



- 4 May the letters on a little street be written in stone? (8)
- 5 The aim I have is obviously to make a salad, in part. (6)
- 6 Perhaps stupid people like coming up with a few added words here. (4)
- 7 What may end up as a roast gets the blame perhaps after we started up. (3,4)
- 8 Such as Utah just as an exposition? (5,4)
- 14 The pace I'd made is rather wild, but may be a general help. (4-2-4)
- 15 See 11 across
- 17 Roles, perhaps, for a spoilsport. (3,5)
- 19 Possibly leaves a major point inside, as a way to subjugate someone. (7)
- 21 What is this 26! (Took a nap with 25.) (7)

- 22 Guys appear to get older in the domestic establishment. (6)
- 26 See 28 across
- 27 London created one of the wild type. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2883



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